

# THE CHICAGO JEWISH FORUM

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## *Contents*

FOR A SURVEY OF THE JEWISH TRAGEDY - - - -	Jacob Lestschinsky	151
ANTI-SEMITISM AND LABOR - - - - -	Edward Wahl	163
THE GENTILE NOTE IN JEWISH MUSIC - - - -	Charles Haywood	167
ON MORTALITY— <i>A Poem</i> - - - - -	Harold Applebaum	173
TEN GREATEST JEWISH BOOKS - - - - -	Louis Zara	174
SOME AMERICAN JEWISH NOVELISTS - - - - -	Brom Weber	177
AND WHAT DID YOU DO SAMMY?— <i>A Short Story</i> - - - -	Max Alth	185
LANDSMANN THEME IN YIDDISH-AMERICAN LITERATURE -	Boruch Glassman	187
BEFORE THE WEDDING— <i>A Reproduction</i> - - - - -	Artist Unknown	195
NEW YORK NOTES - - - - -	Vero	196
WASHINGTON NOTES - - - - -	Murray Frank	200
REFUGEE— <i>A Poem</i> - - - - -	Eleanor Alletta Chaffee	205
BOOK REVIEWS - - - - -		206-218

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# For a Survey of the Jewish Tragedy

By JACOB LESTSCHINSKY

*Remember the days of old,  
Consider the years of many generations;  
Ask thy father, and he will declare unto thee  
Thine elders, and they will tell thee.*

—Deut. xxxii. 7

## I. Historical Precedents

THE HISTORY of the Jews in the Diaspora has been marked by a series of disasters of cataclysmic proportions. Periodically, the basic insecurity of a people in Exile has been highlighted by massacres and expulsions, shaking the very foundations of Jewry and causing untold misery and loss of life. Jewish literature, as well as the synagogue liturgy, is replete with elegies and penitential prayers composed by contemporaries of these events. Yet there is a singular lack of authentic information on the concrete facts and figures, nay, of the very dates of the disasters. As Simon Dubnow, greatest Jewish historian of our times, complains:

The Middle Ages have bequeathed us no systematic chronography; our horrifying tragedies have found no competent annalists. For information about the lives of our forefathers we must depend upon alien and, all too often, hostile sources; the chronicles and polemics of Catholic monks; the tendentious, doctored reports of ritual trials. (*History of the Jewish People*, German edition, V, 499.)

Perhaps Jewish chroniclers shared the feeling of the Talmudic sage, R. Simon ben Gamaliel, who said, "Were we once to commence writing, there would be no end" (Shabat, 13b). This is particularly applicable to the present Jewish tragedy, which is unequal even in our long martyrology. Anyone familiar with the wealth of material which has already accumu-

lated on the events of the past twelve years will admit that "there would be no end" indeed. In any case, Jewish chronicles give no clear picture of some of the most significant events of our history. The number of Jews who perished during the Crusades or during the Black Plague has not been recorded, nor is any record extant of the number of Jewish communities affected by those disasters. Similarly, there are no acceptable statistics on the number of Jews expelled from Spain: some contend there were 800,000 (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Russian edition, VIII, 391) while others estimate 200,000 (Dubnow, *op. cit.*, V, 405). Nor has it ever been determined how many Jews remained in Spain and how many of the latter embraced Christianity sincerely and how many did so in appearance only. Graetz estimates that at the end of the thirteenth century there were 850,000 Jews in Castile, while Isidore Loeb, one of the foremost authorities on the Hispanic period of Jewish history, puts them at 234,000—less than a third of Graetz's estimate. Obviously, if Graetz is right, there must have been more Jews in Spain at the time of the Expulsion than if we accept Loeb's figure. And if there were more Jews in the country, more were expelled and more remained behind.

No less inadequate are the available statistics about the loss of life during the Ukrainian massacres in 1648, despite the

much more abundant material available about that period. "The Ukrainian disaster," says Dubnow (*ibid.*, VII, 509,) "and the ten years of misery which followed, produced the first Jewish annalists." The famous work of Nathan Hanover, *Yivan Mezulah* ("Deep Abyss"), is noteworthy, not only for the precise and detailed account of the excesses which took place (even to the extent of giving the names of many of the victims, both Jewish and Polish,) but for the statistical data on the Jews in certain localities and on the number of casualties as well. Yet, notwithstanding this excellent report by a man who was not only an eye-witness but also a most scrupulous chronicler, Dubnow again bewails the fact that the Jewish annalists of the period give disparate estimates of the number of victims. He cites figures ranging from 100,000 to 500,000 (Dubnow, *op. cit.*, VII, 40). The historian is forced to accept the arithmetic mean of these figures, or 300,000, as the correct estimate.

Little as we know of the number of fatalities during those historic disasters, we know hardly more of the other aspects of those tragedies. Do we, for instance, know the true number of Spanish Jews who found refuge in Turkey, North Africa, southern France, Italy, or the Balkans? Do we have even an approximate idea of how much Jewish property was confiscated or looted during the expulsion from Spain, or the amount which the Jews managed to take away with them when they departed? Do we have any accurate conception of the number of Jews who fled from the Chmielnicki pogroms in 1648, their dispersion over various lands, their circumstances at the time they took flight, and their lot in the countries of refuge? Were they all destitute when they escaped, or did some manage to save their goods? And if the latter was the case, how many were there in this category?

We know, for example, that in Constantinople there was a committee which

undertook to ransom all captured Spanish refugees. This committee's functions included the maintenance of the refugees who were then arriving in Turkey in large numbers. It is estimated that that country alone absorbed more than 100,000 Spanish Jews. The committee collected funds for the maintenance of the refugees, not only from the relatively near Jewish communities of Saloniki, Leghorn, and Venice, but also from the more distant communities of Amsterdam and Hamburg. Unfortunately, no records of the activities or accomplishments of that committee have come down to us.

The enormity of the Ukrainian disaster of 1648 roused the Jews of various countries to concerted action. The Jewish Councils of Poland and Lithuania ordered their respective communities to receive refugees with love and kindness. In Lithuania, the Council issued special instructions for house-to-house collections (Salo W. Baron, *The Jewish Community*, II, 335); it also undertook to settle 2,000 refugees (*ibid.*, p. 338). As we know, thousands of Ukrainian Jews were made captive by Crimean Tartars during the pogroms of 1648 and the following years, and it was the Jews of Constantinople who ransomed them. Since large sums of money were required for this undertaking, the Constantinople Kehillah sent an emissary to Amsterdam and Italy to help raise them (*ibid.*, I, 307; Dubnow, *op. cit.*, VII, 41). But again, aside from interesting but general information like the foregoing, we know little or nothing about the plans, activities, and achievements of the organizations of that period.

Even when we pass to the catastrophies of more recent times, our information is far from complete.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produced no such historic crises as the massacres during the Crusades, the expulsion from Spain, the pogroms of 1648, or the horrors we ourselves have experienced. Yet the 224 Czarist pogroms



of 1881-1883, relatively minor in extent as they were, had a shattering effect of epoch-making intensity upon the Jewish Community (*Die Juden-Pogrome in Russland*, Cologne and Leipzig, 1910, II, 189). The pogroms of the 1880's stand out in Jewish history, not only because of the unprecedented repercussions in the non-Jewish world; they brought about a radical revaluation of the "emancipation" of Jews from the Ghetto, and produced new ways of thinking which altered the course of Jewish history. The great movements of migration to the Western Hemisphere, and also to Palestine, were initiated. The pogroms sharply reminded Jews that, despite emancipation, they remained in Exile.

However, compared with the 725 pogroms in Russia during the Revolution of 1905 (*ibid.*, p. 192), or the 2,000 pogroms of the bloody years in the Ukraine between 1918 and 1921, under Denikin and Petlura, or the mass slaughters of the Hitler era, the loss of life during the pogroms of 1881 was insignificant, amounting only to a few score casualties (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17). The main damage done was the result of looting. Even the pogroms of 1905 claimed only about 1,000 Jewish victims (*ibid.*, pp. 213-214). It was not until the Denikin and Petlura pogroms, during the second Russian Revolution of 1918-1921, that, for the first time since 1648, the number of Jews killed—about 75,000 victims—represented a significant fraction of the population. The Hitler massacres have undoubtedly cost the lives of more Jews than were slain during all the preceding pogroms, excesses, expulsions, and persecutions of the last thousand years.

Even as late as the 1880's the Jews were not sufficiently advanced, let alone organized, to undertake an independent investigation concerning the causes or the organizers and participants in the outrages, or concerning the reactions of various local Jewish groups, or concerning the relations between Jews and non-Jews

before and after the pogroms. All of these problems were touched upon in the press, both Jewish and general, but far from adequately. The Jewish press in the Russian language—two weeklies, *Ruski Yevrei*, and *Razsviet*, and one monthly, *Voskhod*—devoted much space to the pogroms. However, these periodicals labored under the double handicap of severe censorship restrictions and the incompleteness of the information reaching them, which consisted solely of reports on particular localities. The material—the work of many hands—was lacking in both uniformity and critical objectivity.

It was not until thirty years later that Leo Motzkin, who initiated the survey of the pogroms of 1905, gave an extremely valuable report also on the anti-Jewish outbreaks of the 1880's incidentally illuminating the economic and political atmosphere which made those outbreaks possible: Nevertheless, even Motzkin was unable to deal exhaustively with the events of the 1880's, despite his thorough and conscientious examination of all the available material: the contemporary Russian and foreign press; reports of relief organizations; gubernatorial reports to the central Government; records of court trials; the findings of the Pahlen Commission, officially called the "Higher Commission for the Revision of Jewish Legislation in the Russian Empire," which was created in 1883 under the chairmanship of Count Pahlen for the purpose of investigating the economic role of the Jews and the laws pertaining to them. It was only after the secret archives of the Czarist Government became accessible after the Revolution of 1917 that certain documents were published which yielded much information about the pogroms of the 1880's, but far more important, about the economic part played by the Jews in the regions where the excesses took place. For the first time the world was able to read the memoranda and statements submitted to the Govern-

ment authorities by various groups, Jewish and non-Jewish. In 1923 N. I. Krassni-Admoni edited, and wrote the introductory chapter to, a collection of these documents, entitled *Materials for a History of the Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia* (Russian), and covering only the period from April 15, 1881 to February 28, 1882.

Unfortunately, though this was only the second volume of a projected series, it also proved to be the last. The first volume of the series, edited jointly by Simon Dubnow and Krassni-Admoni, both of whom wrote introductory articles, had been published in 1919. It was devoted exclusively to the Dubosar and Kishinev pogroms of 1903. The reason for not issuing the remaining volumes, despite the vast amount of unpublished materials, was disclosed by the editor in the introduction to Volume II (p. vi):

It would indeed be highly regrettable if we must conclude with this volume, the publication of the material we have on hand. However, such a possibility exists, since the Government has refused to sponsor further private commissions and institutions.

Certainly the volume just mentioned served to cast much light on the pogroms of the period in question. Nevertheless, such official documentation can never replace the findings of a Jewish commission of inquiry, had there been one at the time. The official documents confined themselves almost exclusively to a consideration of the external factors and causes of the pogroms. From the Jewish standpoint, a record of the psychological effects on Russian Jewry of the events of the 1880's would have been far more valuable. We know some of the direct results of the pogroms: the wave of emigration, the rise of the *Am Olam*<sup>1</sup> groups, and finally, perhaps most significant of all, the birth of the Zionist movement and of the *Bilu*<sup>2</sup>—all of which clearly indicates a far-reaching impression left by the pogroms upon Russian Jewry. Both the *Am Olam* and *Bilu* movements were primarily motivated by the shock sus-

tained by the Russian Jewish intelligentsia, a comparatively thin stratum of Jewish society in the larger cities of Russia. Yet even a close study of these and similar movements motivated or accelerated by the pogroms, gives us only an incomplete picture of the temper of the Russian Jewish masses at that time. Indeed, there are no adequate chronicles or other sources for a deeper understanding of that period, the prelude to the Zionist and Jewish revolutionary movements which dominated the history of the subsequent decades.

The situation had notably improved, in this respect, by 1905. We have much to learn from the survey of the pogroms of 1905 which was organized and, for the most part, edited and published by Leo Motzkin.

The work was financed by London Zionists, and a number of active Russian Zionists helped in its execution. The research was conducted as objectively as possible. In the words of the fact-finding commission:

... Our aim was to record all the facts and collect all the material, avoiding any bias. All collaborators, Zionists and non-Zionists alike, were constantly warned that the value of the work lay in its absolute objectivity. The exhaustive questionnaire was also worked out in this spirit. (*Die Juden-Pogrome in Russland*, I. vi, Introduction.)

In the introductory outline of aims and methods, great weight is attached to the "peculiar situation of the Jews in the affected areas" and to "the immediate background of the anti-Jewish excesses." Stressing the importance of establishing the "motive forces of the various pogrom

<sup>1</sup>*Am Olam* (The Eternal People): A movement among Russian Jewish socialists to emigrate to America.

<sup>2</sup>*Bilu*, abbreviation formed of the initials of the Hebrew words, *Beth Jacob lekhnu v'nelko* ("House of Jacob, come, let us go!"): A movement among the Jewish student youth of Russia to emigrate to Palestine with the intention of establishing agricultural colonies.

stages," the editor emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive inquiry into the attitude toward the Jews of the surrounding non-Jewish elements, and their reactions to the pogroms; as well as into the behavior of the Jewish population, the resistance it put up, and its fight for life and honor.

A questionnaire was prepared consisting of seven sections and fifty-eight questions. This was regarded as only a general framework for individual inquiries, which had to be adapted to the most diverse local conditions—a fact which is stressed in the Introduction. From the structure of the questionnaire it is evident that the inquiry was not intended to cover individuals but only groups, although individual depositions were taken as evidence. The questionnaire was based on a chronological plan:

**Part I—General Information:** Embraces local demographic, economic, and political conditions. On the theory that economic conditions cannot be measured by local conditions but require study on a larger geographical scale, the economic situation was allotted far less space in the questionnaire than the political.

**Part II—The Period Immediately Preceding the Pogrom:** Devoted to the politico-social atmosphere which was the immediate cause of the pogroms. The questionnaire deals also with the steps taken by Jews to prevent a pogrom, the response of local authorities to rumors and preparations for pogroms, and the attention, if any, given to Jews who raised the question of possible pogroms.

**Part III—The Pogrom Itself:** Concerned with factual information about the outrages.

**Part IV—The Composition and Organization of the Pogrom Bands:** A picture of the social and cultural level from which the pogrom bands and their leadership were drawn—whether local or out-

side elements, rural or urban, active participants or passive accessories.

**Part V—Behavior of Government Agencies, the Military, and Municipal Authorities During the Pogrom:** Inquiries into the attitudes and activities of the various organs of government, their active participation in, or their efforts to hinder or prevent, the violence.

**Part VI—Jewish and Non-Jewish Society** (the largest and most important section): Primarily an attempt to discover as exhaustively and as clearly as possible the facts concerning the behavior of the Jewish population during the pogroms. Every act of resistance whether collective or individual, organized or spontaneous, was to be recorded and carefully evaluated. The conduct of the various classes of Jews was to be submitted to sharp scrutiny. Every active demonstration on the part of the non-Jewish population, whether favorable or antagonistic to the Jews, organized or spontaneous, collective or individual was to be described in detail.

**Part VII—The Consequences of the Pogrom:** Devoted to a roster of the dead and the injured, an enumeration of property losses and damages, the economic outcome (in the broader sense of the word) for the Jews, and finally, movements in Jewish life which might be regarded as resulting directly from the pogroms: emigration, etc.

In general, it must be stated that though the questionnaire was scrupulously objective in dealing with the pogroms, much emphasis was laid on the subjective aspect of the disaster—on the reaction of Jewish society to the pogroms and the conclusions it drew from them.

The work began in December, 1905, two months after the cessation of the pogroms. Twenty people were engaged for months in collecting material. The staff was divided into five persons at a central office and fifteen in the field, covering

eighty-five localities of considerable size and a number of minor ones. In addition to the staff of twenty research workers, there were hundreds of volunteers scattered all over the country who collected data locally. In applying the questionnaire, the field workers frequently found it necessary to abandon the set formula in favor of new forms—always, however, following the general framework of the original. Such alterations were dictated by varying local conditions, by different places, and by the varying reactions of the population.

The final survey of the pogroms made use not only of the material collected by the staff, but of the material and documents as well: the press, trial-records, reports of relief agencies, official documents (gubernatorial reports on the pogroms in Kiev, Odessa, and other cities), the stenographic records of contemporary Duma sessions, etc.

Considering that the entire inquiry had to be conducted *sub rosa* in order to avoid police obstruction (the police, in fact, destroyed any records they found), the two volumes of almost 1,000 pages represent a worthy monument to the pogroms of 1905. It is impossible today to write about the Jews in Russia during the first quarter of the twentieth century without reference to them.

World War I ushered in a new chapter of Jewish mass tragedy. The expulsion of more than half a million Jews by the Czarist Government from the Eastern combat zones, the pogroms perpetrated by the Russian armies in Galicia, the deportation of Galician Jews to the farthest wastes of Siberia, the false accusation of espionage, and the death sentences imposed on innocent Jews—this whole accumulation of disaster and misery, lasting from the early months of the war till the March Revolution of 1917, was reported in exhaustive detail to certain Russian Jewish organizations: EKOPO (Central Committee for the Relief of Jewish War

Sufferers), ORT (Society for the Promotion of Crafts and Agriculture among Jews), OSE (Organization for the Protection of the Health of Jews), and OPE (Society for the Advancement of Culture among Jews). Representatives of these bodies personally visited all the affected areas, and, after conducting thorough investigations, transmitted their reports to the central offices of their respective organizations. In addition, the Political Commission of the Jewish Deputies of the Duma collected all available juridical data on the spy-trials staged by the Czarist Government to cloak the disgrace of its military defeats. The newspapers and journals of that period found it almost impossible to touch upon the political aspect of the persecution and oppression of the Jews, but much space was devoted to a review of the economic and cultural ruin of whole Jewish communities. Thus, the most detailed and valuable material about this disastrous period remains buried in the reports of the aforesaid accredited Jewish investigators, most of whom were drawn from the upper stratum of the Jewish democratic and revolutionary intelligentsia. This invaluable material is now unavailable. The archives of the aforementioned organizations eventually became the property of the GEZCOM, better known as the IDGEZCOM (Jewish Communist Committee for Help to Refugees and Pauperized Persons), after having been confiscated by the Jewish Section of the Communist Party. The Jewish Communists at first announced plans for studying this material and publishing a series of comprehensive surveys of the events of the war years as well as of the postwar period. It is to be deplored that no such works have yet appeared, nor is it even known whether these archives are still preserved or whether any study of them is contemplated.

The only published data are those collected by S. Anski in Galicia. As an au-



thorized representative of the Union of Russian Municipalities, he was not only in a position to witness the Cossack pogroms in Galicia, but also to gather data about them. Almost single-handed, and on his own responsibility, he amassed a tremendous amount of material on Jewish martyrdom during the occupation of Galicia by Russian forces. Part of this valuable material was published by Anski himself under the title *Khurban Galicia* ("The Destruction of Galicia"). Although this is not a scientific work based on verified data and facts, it nevertheless represents an historical document of enormous value, since it is a record of events witnessed personally by Anski or related to him by other eyewitnesses. But the major portion of the notes, materials, and documents (several hundred in number) collected by him is still unpublished, part remaining in the Anski Museum in Vilna and the rest in Leningrad. Who can tell how much of this collection still remains intact, and how much can still be utilized by future Jewish historians!

For the historian, the conclusion to be drawn from all the foregoing is disheartening. To this very day, all the persecutions, expulsions, calumnies, pogroms, devastations, and epidemics which the Jews suffered during World War I have never been properly chronicled. True, Dubnow's *History* gives a fairly accurate picture of this dark period; we also possess individual studies of this important era—the precursor of our present catastrophe. But, in the final analysis, the whole period still awaits proper analysis and elucidation.

The Denikin and Petlura pogroms in the Ukraine—the severest trial the Jews of that region had to bear since the massacres of 1648—did not fare much better in this respect, notwithstanding the vast amount of material, without parallel in Jewish archives, which was collected about them. The guiding spirit and most sedulous collector of the documents of

that period was the late historian, Eliahu Tcherikower, whose passionate devotion to the task of gathering scattered items is responsible for an accumulation of documents, materials, and photographs rich enough to furnish matter for ten bulky volumes. Suffice it to enumerate a few of the items in this pogrom collection: a detailed roster of tens of thousands of the pogrom dead; more than 400 photographs of butchered corpses, wounded persons, and pogrom-stricken towns; several thousand official documents, decrees, and ordinances issued by various organs of government, central and local, and by Cossack chieftains; thousands of newspaper clippings; hundreds of letters and diaries written by survivors; thousands of depositions; several films of the pogromists in action; hundreds of reports by relief committees of various communities where pogroms took place, the complete files of the Yiddish, Russian, and Ukrainian press for the years 1918-1920.

This collection, established early in 1919 in Kiev by the Jewish Relief Committee for Pogrom Victims, was later, after its removal to Berlin, converted into a separate institution called the Eastern Jewish Historical Archives. Thanks to the indefatigable labors of Tcherikower, the collection was augmented by the files of the following bodies: the National Secretariat of the Jewish National Assembly of the Ukraine; the Jewish Ministry of the Ukraine; the Red Cross Division for Aid to Pogrom Victims; the Moscow and Kiev relief committees; the Jewish Communities of Kiev, Odessa, and Kharkov; the Kiev League Against Anti-Semitism; parts of the archives of the IDGEZCOM and of the Joint Distribution Committee; certain heretofore unpublished records concerning the insurrectionist bands in the Ukraine (from the files of the Kiev Cheka); the archives of the Kishinev, Warsaw, and Lemberg relief committees for Ukrainian refugees, and a great number of miscellaneous collections, such as



those of the Committee of Jewish Delegations, the National Council of Warsaw, etc.

At great pains on Tcherikower's part, this vast collection was transferred from Kiev to Moscow and thence to Berlin, where work was begun on the material. The original plan was to publish seven volumes under the following titles: *Anti-Semitism and Pogroms in the Ukraine, 1917-1918*; *The Pogroms of the Volunteer Army—The Denikin Pogroms*; *The Civil War and the Pogroms*; *The Consequences of the Pogroms*; *Accounts of Individual Pogroms*, listing the stricken localities and the names of the dead, numbering tens of thousands; *Materials for a History of the Jewish Self-Defense Units*. The editors of this ambitious project proved unfortunately incapable of procuring the funds required to enable the assigned authors to set to work. It therefore proved impossible to publish more than two volumes: *Anti-Semitism and Pogroms in the Ukraine* (in Yiddish and Russian), by E. Tcherikower, and *The Pogroms of the Volunteer Army*, by J. Schectmann. In 1933 Tcherikower once more performed the herculean task of transferring the archives to another city—this time to Paris. Here they remained until 1940, when they were removed to Marseilles for safekeeping. Only a small portion of the collection, thanks once more to the self-sacrificing devotion of Tcherikower, found its way to New York in 1941, and is now part of the archives of the Yiddish Scientific Institute there.

In this case, too, we must conclude that Jewry has failed to preserve for posterity an adequate record of its tragedies. To our stateless people, for whom the book and especially the historical book must take the place of land and state, and whose national heritage is embodied in books rather than institutions,—to such a people, the past must mean more than it possibly can to nations with their own country and government. It is thus espe-

cially regrettable that the volume about the Jewish self-defense units, which would certainly have proved a source of comfort and pride to Jewry, was never written.

To be sure, it is not difficult to explain this failure to prepare and publish the material concerning one of the greatest catastrophes in our history. With the outbreak of World War I there began the disintegration of Russian Jewry—that force which, in the period prior to the war, had been the mainspring of all Jewish social and national movements, the cradle of all our cultural achievements and aspirations. Before the collected war data could be properly arranged, we found ourselves engulfed in a wave of pogroms; before the pogrom data could be wholly assembled and organized, we were forced to look for new homes and a measure of security. Again and again we found ourselves pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of peace, attempting to adjust ourselves to normal routine. Once more, in the most recent years, we were overwhelmed by a tidal wave of persecution which drove all concern in previous afflictions from our thoughts.

And now we are faced with the greatest and most responsible historical task of our generation: to relate to our children, and to their children, the course and causes of the direst disaster which has ever befallen the Jewish people; to tell our children, unto endless generations, how the weak and powerless people of Israel fought valiantly to its last drop of blood, not so much for its life as for its national honor and human dignity.

## II. *The Specific Aims of the Survey*

The aims of our survey are determined by the unique character and unexampled magnitude of the present catastrophe. No previous disaster in Jewish Diaspora history has had the same international character. It is not only that the present catastrophe has engulfed the Jews of twenty-

one countries, or more than two-thirds of Europe, with a Jewish population of nearly 9,000,000—in other words, a full 90 per cent of European Jewry and over half of world Jewry; not only that the modern anti-Semitic movement which prompted the slaughter has assumed an undeniably international aspect, having set as its goal the international extermination of the Jewish people—not just of specific groups or classes, but of the entire people of Israel—and this, too, openly and boldly, before the eyes of the whole world. When we speak of the international character of the present disaster, it is because of its *political* implication, because of the fatal role of anti-Semitism in the present World War, because it is inextricably interwoven with all the major international political events of our time.

The world has begun to realize that anti-Semitism is one of the most dangerous forces in international relations. It was no mere accident, as has now become incontestably clear, that Hitler's worldwide network of espionage, treachery and betrayal coincided with the anti-Semitic organizations in each country. Still less was it a mere coincidence that all traitorous quisling-governments worked hand-in-hand with the anti-Semitic elements of their own countries.

A superficial awareness of the existence of these facts is not enough, however, to make them the vital factors they should be in forming national and international policies. The vicious implications of the international political anti-Semitic network must be exposed and unravelled; concrete facts must be amassed to demonstrate how various quisling-governments, under the most dissimilar political and economic conditions, have played the Jew-baiting tune in order to win the sympathies of certain elements; how the quislings hid their own duplicity behind the mask of anti-Semitism; how, slyly and

successfully, Hitler broke through the guard of nations, among whom the philosophy of national-socialism would not otherwise have found a responsive chord, by concealing his actual intentions behind that same protective screen; and finally, what tactics Hitler employed to disorganize and undermine those very countries against whom he was already whetting his sword.

The illumination of this problem should be among the first tasks undertaken by the future United Nations Assembly. Unfortunately, though we are the people most vitally concerned, any investigation along the above-indicated lines would be entirely beyond our power, not only because of the enormous material means it would require, but also because it would necessitate access to the state and military archives of many lands; for only with the help of governments can such an undertaking be carried through.

This does not mean, however, that we Jews are absolved from responsibility and may leave the whole matter to some international agency. On the contrary, it is incumbent upon us to keep the public conscience awake to a problem which the past years have only begun to bear upon it. It will not suffice merely to call attention to facts which are already known to all the world. Certainly, we must assemble all available data. But there is another phase of the work which is even more vital. Modern anti-Semitism is a powerful social movement, affecting great masses and equipped with the usual propaganda weapons employed by mass organizations. Interested groups exploit anti-Semitism for international purposes—injecting the issues of race-hatred and national prejudice (primarily anti-Semitism) into all discussions for the purpose of confusing the masses. It is the insidious effect of anti-Semitism in all international problems that we must analyze and expose to the world. Only then may we

hope that an international political body will interest itself in the problem and see it in its proper light.

For another reason, too, we must not permit ourselves to neglect our self-imposed task: because the catastrophe of our times has had grave international consequences not only for the Gentile world, but for our people too. The exceptional position of the Jew, which makes him the most logical and convenient international scapegoat, has been highlighted most strikingly during the past twelve years of disaster and bloodshed. Yet it would be self-delusion if we were for a moment to think that this fact is recognized by the world at large, or for that matter, by all Jewish circles, and that there is the necessary understanding and preparedness for those measures which are required to do away with the anomaly.

The international significance of our present plight is not the most important consideration determining the purpose of the proposed investigations. Even more important is our obligation to the Jewish people to commemorate for future generations the disaster which has struck us; to record for ever, in the clearest form—by word and picture—the magnitude of the destruction and desolation which is our lot.

Such an investigation is urgent now—not for ourselves so much as for posterity. Soup kitchens and clothing for the destitute can be provided without the complication of investigations and inquiries; but the primary prerequisite for a program of Jewish reconstruction for centuries to come is an exhaustive inquiry into the causes and extent of present-day events and an analysis of the results to which they have already led and must still invariably lead.

For this purpose, it is important that we deal not only with externals such as statistical data on the number slaughtered, violated, crippled in body and

spirit; the damage to property; the degree to which Jews have been pauperized by the disaster; the transfer of Jewish economic positions to non-Jewish hands; the attitude of Gentiles, in their various social groupings and classes, to the slaughter, looting, and, especially, to the exclusion of the Jews from economic, political, and cultural activity. We are equally concerned with the *internal* effect of our tragedy. An accurate study of the situation demands the honest presentation of both light and shade: just as we record the heroism of some who died to spare their brethren torture, so must we tell of the base egoism of the others who were willing to sell their fellow-sufferers into the hands of the Nazis on the chance of immunity for themselves. If we report cases of martyrdom in the name of national honor, we must be frank in noting the cases of vile betrayal for thirty gulden. Just as we set down examples of resistance and valiant struggle against overwhelming odds, so must we not fail to record cases of torpor in the face of impending disaster. If we tell of the burning faith and hope which enabled some to endure bodily torture and ignominy, we must not overlook the cases of escapist suicides and conversions.

It is clear that no bias nor *a priori* theorizing must be allowed to affect the compilation or color the final analysis of the material. The approach must be stringently objective and scientific. The inquiry, in all its aspects, must have only one lofty aim: to record for ourselves and for future ages events as they occurred—in detailed accuracy and as comprehensively as possible.

### III. *The Organization of the Project*

It is still premature to outline full technical plans for the complicated and extensive work of investigation, embracing twenty-one countries and thousands of individual localities. We shall therefore confine ourselves to suggestions of a general nature.

It appears that the inquiry will have to be conducted along three distinct lines:

1) *National Inquiry*: The main purpose of this investigation will be to elucidate the politico-judicial phase of the Hitler occupation or control. It goes without saying that such an inquiry can only be carried out in the capital of each country, where jurists and officials who had exercised governmental functions during the occupation will have to be contacted. Legislation concerning Jewish property, the Yellow Badge decree, labor-camps, ghettos, and many other related subjects can be adequately studied only at the source. Also it is far easier to evaluate economic changes and the extent to which those changes have determined or influenced the future economic development of a given country, if the base of operations for the investigation is the national capital. From this center it is also easier to survey the part played by various elements of the population—whether quislings or opponents of Nazism—in the course of the slaughters, and in the “legal” and illegal confiscation of Jewish property, and the seizure of formerly Jewish-held positions. Finally, a country’s capital will be the best place to contact non-Jewish leaders of underground movements, to collect information about the role of Jews in the partisan and guerrilla bands, as well as about the measure of help extended to the Jewish population by various groups.

2) *Special Localities*: It is obvious that it will not be possible to cover all points where Jews formerly resided. In Poland alone there were over 800 sizeable Jewish communities, not to mention countless tiny Jewish settlements which would bring the figure up to thousands. Even if we were to confine ourselves only to the metropolitan centers, there would be many thousands of towns to deal with in the twenty-one countries involved. Only by a systematic selection of the areas to be studied, can the problem be dealt

with adequately. The basis of selection should be a set minimum pre-war Jewish population, or certain exceptional occurrences or circumstances distinguishing any one area. It is our estimate that before the war, there were, in twenty-one countries in question, 120 cities having 10,000 Jews or over. These towns comprised forty to forty-five per cent of the total Jewish population. If we add a number of smaller centers chosen for the extreme violence or, on the contrary, for the relative mildness of their wartime history, which would account for another ten to fifteen per cent of the Jewish population, we may feel confident that material covering this aggregate fifty to sixty per cent of the Jews in the countries in question can be accepted as an accurate reflection of the situation.

These are merely general suggestions. The final plan will, in many instances, have to be adapted to the specific situations of each country. Every rule must have its exception: for Poland and Rumania, where Jews were widely scattered over villages and hamlets and even in farm colonies of their own, the investigation will have to be extended to include rural areas. This would be quite unnecessary in the case of France or Germany. For Galicia, Bessarabia, and Bucovina, where Jews were found in a great number of small communities, it will be necessary to devote more attention to small localities as well as to determine the attitude of various ethnic groups toward the Jews; for France and Germany, where the Jewish populations were more concentrated, these problems will not exist. Similarly in Belgium, with specific conditions of a bi-national state, it will also be necessary to establish the behavior toward the Jews of various ethnic groups, and the investigation will have to embrace quite a different area than in Holland or Denmark, with their homogeneous populations. Manifestly, in the smaller towns the attitude of the surrounding



population toward the Jew is more clearly defined according to ethnic group than in metropolitan centers where distinct nationality characteristics are neutralized. Since the question of attitude of different ethnic groups toward the Jew is most essential to our investigation, great discrimination will have to be exercised in the choice of locality to be studied.

3) *Individuals*: Even if the investigation were not to go beyond an examination of the national and local aspects of the problem (points 1 and 2) the material collected should prove sufficient for an impartial, scientific, and general picture of the course of the persecutions and their aftermath. But unless the individual human element is included in the investigation, the findings are only too likely to prove barren and lifeless. It is therefore indispensable that in every country individual case records be compiled to register deaths of immediate family-members and of distant relatives; property losses and damage; personal experiences and their physical and psychological effects; wartime relations with the non-Jewish population and their effects; cases of personal conflict with the Germans.

It is not possible to predict reliably the number of questionnaires which will eventually be answered, but we may roughly estimate that in order to obtain optimum results no less than 50,000 individual inquiries must be conducted. Obviously, such an investigation will demand the greatest care in the choice of locality. It may be more practicable to make 1,000 inquiries in fifty different places than to obtain the same quantity of replies from only a few "typical" areas. More concrete decisions on questions of methodology must wait until a complete knowledge of the situation in Europe can guide us to the most efficient technique.

It is superfluous to dwell on the geographic scope of such an inquiry: it is sufficient to remember that all the twenty-one European countries which have fallen under Hitler's influence must be included. Obviously, too, not all localities will demand an equal amount of attention. The disparity between countries is not only quantitative, but qualitative as well. Poland will receive greatest prominence in this record of Israel's tragedy—not only because of the superior size of its pre-war Jewish population but because the Germans chose to convert it into a burial-ground for Europe's Jews.

The question of the time to be covered by the investigation arises. Should it begin with September 1939 with the outbreak of war, or with the Munich Conference, when appeasement fanned the flame of Hitler's ambitions, or with March 1938, when Austria was occupied and Hitler gave implicit notice to the world that he intended to conquer Europe and exterminate the Jews? Or should the investigation commence with Hitler's accession to power on January 1933?

There can be little doubt that the inquiry must start with January 1933. One of our primary tasks must be to demonstrate the Nazi use of anti-Semitism as one of its most potent political weapons in preparing for war. Moreover, if not for the passivity of the entire world in face of the degradation of German Jewry, Hitler might never have had the presumption to announce or carry out his program of extermination; it is no overstatement to declare that this indifference has cost millions of Jewish lives. It would be unthinkable to neglect the years before 1939. It is obvious that in order to achieve complete understanding of the situation the investigation must commence at the root of the whole evil, the events of January 1933 in Germany.



# Anti-Semitism and Labor

By EDWARD WAHL

IN SPITE of a determined policy of resistance, active anti-semitism has gained adherents in the factories and war plants of our country. Cheaply printed cards, mimeographed sheets, Coughlinites tracts, have reappeared in large quantities in the midst of war production, assailing the war record of American Jewry, and reiterating ill founded and imaginary charges on the same old themes.

Material circulated in the factories has been chiefly concerned with two ideas: that the Jews started the war, and that the individual Jew is a draft dodger. The cards and leaflets have generally appeared in verse or anecdotal form; of these perhaps the most widely known is a parody of the Marine Hymn, which begins:

"From the shores of Coney Island, looking eastward to the sea, Stands a kosher hot dog merchant, wearing V for Victory," and concludes with:

"Praise the Lord and draft another Christian."

It is important to remember that most non-Jewish workers will think this epic extremely funny, not out of a latent anti-semitism, but because much factory humor and talk is based on religious, national, and racial identification. Nine of ten workers, handed this verse, will think it no more vicious than a similar poem labelling persons of Scotch descent as parsimonious, or Frenchmen as excessively amorous.

The poison of the parody exists in the saccharine coating the humor provides for the message. The humor is accepted without malice. Upon repetition, however, the message is finally assumed to be true.

A statistical diatribe, proving, (and such is impossible) that the Jews were shirking, would not be one-tenth as effective as the vicious doggerel. Rather, there would be argument and debate and actual search for positive information. The doggerel is not questioned on its factual basis.

Where clever propaganda has not been distributed, anti-semitism in union shops is considerably less than in unorganized factories. For a union contract usually brings a lessening of insecurity and a reduction in favoritism. Most union-management contracts give a form of job security, or at least provide that a worker shall not lose his job or his pay rate without union consultation and consent. Emotional and economic insecurities are lessened and anti-semitism and the general search for a scapegoat are remarkably minimized.

The more soundly a union functions, the less friction there is between the minorities. Which is to say, the better the contract in its provisions for job security, fair rates, and the observance of seniority, the more quickly individual grievances are settled; the stronger the workers' confidence in the union, the less chance there is of an anti-semitic sentiment existing.

Where workers are at the sole mercy of management, however, no such condition exists. Here, every other employee is a potential enemy, every move is observed, every extra bit of work done is regarded as an attempt to curry favor with the factory oligarchy. Under such conditions the Jew meets the full measure of social disapproval, and anti-semitism

becomes a daily, workaday feeling, an unending and deeply implanted antagonism.

While the existence of a functioning union is in itself generally a deterrent to anti-semitism, most union leaders on state and national levels are attempting more active programs. The CIO has done a sincere and painstaking job seeking to eliminate not only anti-semitism but also anti-negro and other feelings. The AF of L has tagged along less spiritedly and presumably with less sincerity. Of the major unions, only John L. Lewis' Mineworkers refuse to take any action. This is not due to the miners themselves, who are an extremely progressive group, but to the influence of Mr. Lewis and his associates, whose anti-Roosevelt and anti-war policies put them in alignment with the domestic fascist agencies. The *Mineworkers Journal*, once crammed with intellectual debate, now appears with the worst sort of anti-semitic sniping and an occasional phrase about "International Bankers" and "International Jewry."

The CIO's national and state policies are unswervingly aimed at the abolition of racist thinking. Publications, speeches, programs, are pointed against the problem. Immense political energies are devoted to the support of FEPC laws, of promotion of action against native fascist organizations and individuals. Conferences are held, activities mapped, and the problem is attacked with an acute sociological understanding.

State councils take to the radio to fight racial jingoism; CIO newspapers feature statistics and pictures to show the Jewish contribution to the war effort. Comprehensive and wholehearted, the CIO assault is at best a wan success: it does not reach the people for whom it is intended.

One CIO publication, the inception of a new technique in workers' education, was a comic book attack upon discrimination. It was prepared by the YMCA and distributed by the CIO in enormous quantities under the title, "They Got the

Blame, The Scapegoats of History." It traced racial discrimination from witch burning through to the KKK and the growth of the fascist movement. While, all too often, thousands of copies piled up in union offices and were eventually contributed to the scrap drive, it is safe to assume that the copies which got through were extremely effective ammunition.

Unfortunately, the problem is a constant one. One leaflet, however good, was not sufficient although highly expensive. The expense prohibited an immediate follow up. Other pamphlets demanded printing; other problems were equally or more important to the life of the CIO. National and state officers felt it necessary to provide inspiration in the fight against anti-semitism, but they relied on the local union officers to follow the problem through.

But most local union officers are elected annually. Few feel sufficiently secure in their offices to espouse such a potentially unpopular cause with any degree of fervor. Then, too, most non-Jewish leaders feel that the problem has been overstressed; they see no pressing need to fight it. Jewish leaders have the fear that they will be accused of commencing a local program simply because they are Jewish and they feel that if the problem is coupled with the Negro sentiment, as it should be, that it is too potentially unpopular.

With experienced leaders, specific instances are handled well, particularly if the anti-semitism has its origin with management. Support on such an issue against management is almost unanimous. The situation can be widened to include other minorities. In such cases I have actually seen anti-semitic agitators, leaders of the discrimination movement, walk about intoning, "First they go after the Jews, then the Italians, then the Irish," etc.

But an instance arising from a union group or individual is extremely difficult to fight. In one plant a well liked Polish

worker was found to have brought in a thousand copies of a scurrilous leaflet and begun a distribution. He was stopped and immediately discharged by the company, which evidently understood that it had a situation which would disrupt the union. The union leader agreed to the discharge. Within ten minutes the shop was in an uproar; work ceased and groups formed about the machines. The Jewish workers found themselves excluded. The dominant attitude was that the leaflets were just "fun"; that the worker who had brought them in was being unjustly treated.

Within an hour the shop had divided on national grounds. The Polish workers announced that they were walking out at a specified time. The Italian workers agreed to join. Quick thinking on the part of the Jewish group managed to stop what would have been a racist strike. The Jews declared that they would also strike unless the company relented in its punishment of the guilty worker. A walkout was superfluous then and the worker was suspended for a week as a compromise.

Despite its happy ending the situation revealed how tense the relations were, although this was a strong CIO union. Capably handled through the union's trial committee and through union channels, the incident could probably have been developed into a real educational asset. But the intervention of the company and the thoughtless position of the union leader not only shattered an excellent educational opportunity, but created the basis for a serious rift.

Properly adjusted, treatment would have been something like this: the worker would have been charged with action detrimental to the union and in defiance of the union's constitution. He would have been brought before the elected union trial committee, would have had a trial, complete with counsel if he so desired. A majority of the committee could convict him and he would face a penalty

ranging from suspension to loss of union membership and, (if a closed shop), loss of his job. The decision of the trial committee would be brought for appeal to the next membership meeting and the entire union would either uphold or reverse the decision of its committee.

Situations like this are dramatic details but they are not daily events. Against anti-semitism there must be a constant vigil, if results are to be attained. This implies a persistent educational program conducted by the local union. Only a few of the larger unions actually have such a program. It is the great tragedy of the CIO that it has not had the time to effectuate a real consolidation in every local union.

Such a consolidation, under the sponsorship of a regional or state office, would entail a complete educational program of which the struggle against anti-semitism would be only a part. It would necessarily have to be enacted within the factory by means of discussion groups, newspapers, and all techniques available. And the program would have to analyze and change some of the dominant shop attitudes.

The attitude of group labelling, for instance, would be the first to be attacked. A new worker appearing in a shop is invariably greeted by the question: "What are you?" Once classified, he is expected to live up to his group standard; he will be judged from that standard and expected to conform. Woe to the Jew who works on a Jewish holiday! Woe to the Catholic whose Lenten lunches do not comply with the church dictates. No freedom is permitted a worker who is not in accord with his assigned group.

Another dangerous attitude, more peculiar to Jews, is their tendency to herd together in the factory. Arising defensively, the action is an exclusive one which nearly always throws the Jewish group into an even tighter circle than the attitude of classification expects. Gentile workers resent the esoteric Jewish

groups. Just as a Jew undergoes some trepidation before approaching a group of Italians, so does the Italian fear insult when he approaches an entirely Jewish group.

The defensive huddle causes a corner in the cafeteria to be completely Jewish; the practical jokes are played by Jew upon Jew; thus the Jewish group succeeds in establishing its separate Ghetto within the factory walls.

But the security of a union is conducive to individual thinking and to liberal activity. One of the strongest forces against anti-semitism within the unions comes from the person or group of two or three who have a radical background. The group, rarely comprising more than a handful in even a large factory, fathers a coterie often numbering hundreds who will listen and argue, and unconsciously, often against their will, absorb a considerable amount of education.

The few radicals rarely attain union office but if they are free spirits, untied to a formula or 'line,' they can exert a substantial pressure upon the group in power. They speak consistently at union meetings. They know parliamentary procedure thoroughly, (often much better than the officers), and they make a good show on the union floor. Persistent, untiring, they are continually discussing union affairs and business with anyone who will listen. When work is slack and jobs being stretched out, they can be found in factory toilets in debates with twenty or more hangers-on listening intently. Debates are heated and, long after the original participants leave, they are continued. These persons bring an intellectual approach to national problems; they argue scientifically; they call for facts.

Of all the actual factors operating against anti-semitism within the factories and unions, they are by far the most effective. I call them radicals to distinguish

them from the bulk of the workers. They are not radical in the sense that they are identified with the Communist or Socialist parties. Indeed, individuals from such groups are classified as additional minorities and watched. Rather I mean those who stand out from the group by virtue of more intelligence and more interest in world problems.

Many of these persons, of course, are either absorbed by the regional or state divisions of the unions or drift into other endeavors. While in the factories, however, they exist as the most potent factors in the struggle against discrimination.

The CIO is considerably worried about the growth of anti-semitism, primarily as an advance symbol of fascism. Top leaders feel they have the solution to it and they ascribe its increasing severity here to Hitler, to the insecurity of war jobs, and to the average worker's fear of another depression, in roughly that order.

Now that naziism has been defeated and the concentration camp horrors brought to light, they expect a slow decline in anti-semitism derived from that source. They believe that passage of such bills as an adequate unemployment compensation act on a national level, a full employment bill, guaranteeing a job to every employable, would substantially reduce the tension that finds its outlet in the persecution of a minority.

Faced with the problems of reconversion now, the CIO and the other unions have little time or money for education. But with their problems solved, a campaign will be initiated that will attempt to reach every union card holder, to cure him of his prejudices and to stamp out anti-semitism for good.

The unions are not free spirits; they need public support in order to establish themselves as concretely as possible. Their real work, in a social sense, lies ahead of them and they are eager to get after it.



# *The Gentile Note in Jewish Music*

By CHARLES HAYWOOD

THE USE of Jewish musical materials by non-Jewish composers has, broadly speaking, passed through three phases. At the beginning of the Christian era, there was the inevitable tendency by the first Christians (Jews themselves) to utilize traditional liturgic chants. During the Middle Ages, and even during the Renaissance, the political and social ostracism suffered by the Jew was reflected in the mocking and satirical references by gentile composers to Jewish or quasi-Jewish music. Such instances as Benedetto Marcello's sympathetic approach to Jewish music, as attested by his "Psalms" (published in 1724-27), are marked exceptions to the general trends.

It is only since the latter 18th century that composers have seriously concerned themselves with at least an attempt to understand and apply Jewish musical materials. It is with this last phase that we will be here concerned.

The Progressive movement of the latter 18th and early 19th centuries that enveloped Judaism, particularly that of Germany, had a very marked effect upon Synagogue music. Traditional melodies and Biblical cantillations were trimmed and even avoided. There was a definite tendency to embrace almost completely the Christian style of worship. German Chorale books with Hebrew texts were published. The office of the Chazzan was done away with, the organ was introduced, chanting of the Pentateuch was discontinued, and music for the services was composed largely by Christian musicians in the prevalent German church style.

The custom of having Gentile composers write music for Synagogue service was first introduced by Israel Jacobsen in the Seesen Temple in 1810, and was slavishly and indiscriminately imitated by other congregations. Among one of the reasons for this procedure was the servile eagerness of the reformed Jew to convey to his Gentile colleagues his profound and humble respect for their composers and their music, and a desire to be considered "modern." However, one must also recognize the fact that there were few adequately trained Jewish composers. Nevertheless, the attitude of the German Jew of the early 19th century was that the German-European melodies alone were capable of arousing the spirit of devotion.

Matters went so far that Synagogue music was considered good music if it had the approval of Gentile musicians. In every Synagogue the service consisted of two elements; the musical part, that is composition by Gentiles, and Chazzanuth, the insinuation being that Chazzanuth was not included in music.

Who were some of these early 19th century Gentile composers whose musical "genius" was so eagerly sought by the reformed German Jew to enrich and modernize his religious services? Here is an imposing list, imposing in its mediocrity. The names are drawn from among those connected with the Hamburg Synagogue: I. H. G. Stoewing, A. G. Methfessel, J. A. G. Heinroth, Lutgert, Groenlan, Demuth, Schink, Schwenke, and others.

No wonder then that the highly gifted Solomon Sulzer, Chazzan and musical director of the great Vienna Temple, had



to depend upon a number of Gentile composers for contributions to his musical services. Although Sulzer himself was almost completely under the influence of German church composers, he nevertheless honestly felt a nostalgic need for the inclusion of the old traditional Hebrew melodies, and the tropal manner of cantillation.

Sulzer did not wish to abandon completely the heritage of the past, but he saw the need of a restoration which should remain on historical ground. He sought to find out the original noble forms of Hebraic materials, developing them in artistic style. The old generation would recognize the familiar and endeared element, while the young generation would be educated to the application of it. The principle was "to unite the heart of the fathers with that of the children and to win ambitious youth for the sentiments of the older generation . . . The old tunes and singing modes which became national should be improved, selected, and digested to the rules of art. But also new musical creations should not be avoided (the reference here is to the employment of non-Jewish talent), and for that purpose great heroes of music stood helpfully at my side, such as Seyfried, Schubert, Fischhoff, and others."

It is interesting to note that in the first edition of Sulzer's work "Shir Zion" in 1838, the compositions of the Christian collaborators were not specified, presumably to avoid antagonism. Sulzer must have honestly sensed the inappropriateness of their participation in spite of the statements in his *Denkschrift*. But the latter was published in 1876. He was then able to look back in serene contemplation. But in 1838 Sulzer evidently felt somewhat differently towards this matter. In the second edition, published in 1905 by his son Joseph, the names of the Christian contributors to Part 1 are given.

In point of interest and significance the most important name on that list is Franz

Schubert. He set the 92nd Psalm, "Tov L'hodos," to the Hebrew text for unaccompanied mixed chorus, solo quartet, and baritone solo. He employed no traditional Hebrew tunes in composing the work. Outside of the fact that Schubert set the Psalm to the original Hebrew text there is no more of the Jewish melos in this work than in the same composer's "Der Erl König." The part writing, the melodic contour are in the same spirit as in Schubert's other choral works. The Psalm, translated into German by Moses Mendelssohn—"Liblich ist's dem Ewigen danken"—became quite popular in the German Lutheran and Protestant churches.

None of the other non-Jewish contributors to "Shir Zion" used Hebrew Synagogue or folk tunes, nor is there any suggestion of Jewish spirit in their compositions. The general characteristics of the music of these Gentile composers can be summed up in the same words Idelsohn applies broadly to most of the work of Sulzer: "The Jew considered the creations non-Jewish, while the Christian felt it foreign to them, and therefore counted it Jewish." These composers did not know what the really traditional Jewish music was like; they were not only completely ignorant of the Semitic-Oriental melos, but also of the richly varied Ashkenazic tunes for individual prose or poetical texts. What these non-Jewish composers instinctively did realize was that the manner of Jewish musical expression was a different one from that of the German. This vague conception and tenuous attitude unfortunately affected the musical style of a great deal of Jewish liturgic musical composition for a long time. Until very recently, and this was particularly true in quite a number of reformed temples in America, much of the Synagogue music sounded neither Jewish to the Jew, nor Christian to the Gentile.

The name of a prominent German composer universally associated with Kol

Nidre and one who clearly acknowledged his profound admiration and indebtedness to Jewish music is Max Bruch. The popularity of this composition, the Violoncello Concerto for orchestra, Op. 47, has led to the belief among Gentiles and Jews that Bruch was a Jew. However a glance at Bruch's letter to Eduard Birnbaum, dated April 12, 1889, would have at once established the religious background of the composer, and the source of his "Hebraic musical inheritance." I translate a portion of this letter:

Breslau, 4/12/89

"... Already as a young man, in the years 1861-63 I had shown a predilection towards the study of the folk songs of all nations. The folk song is a source of all true melody, a fresh well where one can be sustained, . . . Thus the study of Hebrew national folk music also occupied my attention. Kol Nidre and other songs I came to know through the Lichtenstein family whom I had met in Berlin. Although *I am a Protestant*, yet, as an artist, I fully appreciate the extraordinary beauty of these songs, and have happily employed them in my compositions.

Your devoted,

Max Bruch."

Thus Bruch himself attests that he was profoundly stirred by Jewish music. We must assume that in this composition the composer earnestly hoped to create an artistic work expressing the spiritual content of this melody, revelatory of deep resignation and poignant supplication.

However, the result is a fine piece of music in the spirit of 19th century German romanticism but hardly evocative of Jewish sentiment. The Kol Nidre melody pulsing with a warm majestic solemnity and poignant sadness wanders pitifully in an harmonic and orchestral milieu completely foreign to it. In Bruch's concerto the traditional melody is there, but dressed up in ill-fitting garments. One misses the profound "awe, repentance, and hope"

inherent in Kol Nidre. Bruch displayed a fine art, masterly technique and fantasy, but not Jewish sentiment.

Bruch's sympathetic treatment of the Jewish melody calls to mind another work, also for cello and orchestra, the Hebrew rhapsody, "Schelomo," by Ernest Bloch—a Jew. One hearing of these two works convinces the listener at once of the vast gulf separating these two composers. The Bloch composition is permeated with a spontaneous rhapsodic glow and Hebraic inspiration. One of the first music critics to call attention to the greatness of Bloch as a composer, and to the "Schelomo" in particular was the Italian musicologist, Guido M. Gatti. Writing in 1921 he declared, "The violoncello, with its ample breadth of phrasing, now melodic and with moments of superb lyricism, now declamatory and with robustly dramatic lights and shades, lends itself to a reincarnation of Solomon in all his glory . . . One finds oneself in the heart of a dream world, in an Orient of fancy, where men and women of every race and tongue are holding argument or hurling maledictions; and now and again we hear the mournful accents of the prophetic seer . . . not one passage, not a single beat, is inexpressive; the entire discourse of the soloist, vocal rather than instrumental, seems like musical expression intimately conjoined with Talmudic prose. The pauses, the repetitions of entire passages, the leaps of a double octave, the chromatic progressions all find their analogies in the book of Genesis." Though we may be somewhat reluctant to accept unreservedly this ecstatic laudation there is no denying the indubitable Jewish spirit that permeates the whole composition.

Another non-Jewish composer, a contemporary of Bruch, was inspired by Jewish melody. Robert Franz, whose name is linked with the creation of some of the most exquisite German art-songs of the 19th century, wrote a pianoforte composition (with or without accompanying

instruments) based on the Hebrew melody: "Weep for Those Who Wept at the Shore of Babel." As in his songs, Franz imbued this solemn mournful tune with a simple restrained and inwardly pulsing accompaniment.

Although not many English composers have shown interest in Jewish music, a few outstanding exceptions are worth noting. Sir George A. Macfarren, product of the Leipzig school of musical thought, composed the Oratorio, "St. John the Baptist," in 1873. In the Overture the composer utilizes the sound of the Shofar, (he employs in this instance a trumpet in C). The interval of a 4th, g to c, equivalent to the second part of the Tekiah Gedolah, is repeated three times at the beginning with increasing volume. In the course of the Overture the Shofar sound is heard a number of times. The composition itself is not of any exceptional musical merit.

Obviously Edward Elgar did not study the Overture to Macfarren's "St. John the Baptist" very carefully, or at least did not understand the significance of the repeated intervals of a perfect 4th signifying the sounds of a Shofar. For when Elgar utilized the Shofar sound in the Oratorio, "The Apostles," Op. 49, when he tried to create the mood of the spiritual stillness of dawn, we hear the sound of a major 6th. This is a complete distortion of the very spirit of the Shofar sound. In the same movement the composer tries to sound the Truoh (rapid succession of notes, tonic, followed by a leap of a 5th), but here again the major 6th is heard. It is an absolute impossibility to sound a major 6th on a Shofar. The sounds that can be produced on a Shofar are what are commonly known as natural-harmonics made by increasing pressure on the column of air contained within the tube. The intervals connected with the Shofar are tonic, fifth, and octave. Not only does Elgar show ignorance of the traditional Shofar sound, but the harmonization un-

derlying the Shofar (the composer uses interchangeably the clarinet and French horn) are foreign to the spirit and tonal color of the Shofar.

The same may be said of the succeeding number, the "Morning Psalm," heard within the Temple. Elgar uses Psalm XC11, "It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord." The melody upon which this section is based is the old Sephardic tune: "Mizmor Shir L'yom Hashabeth." The harmonization is a smooth flowing, chordal progression. The result is a satisfactory West European number but one in which the spirit of the traditional tune is diluted by an unrelated texture. The tender lyricism of the Phrygian melody is obscured by a harmonization that does not recognize the modal character of the melody.

Of all Gentile composers the Russians showed greatest sympathy and understanding of Jewish melody. The main reason is very likely that Jewish music with its Oriental Melismata was much akin to the song of the many Oriental peoples who were part of the great Russian empire. Such music was accepted by the nationalist composers as an indigenous part of their own heritage, and not something esoteric and foreign. From Glinka's "Prince Kholmsky" of 1840, to Prokofieff's "Overture on Jewish Themes," Op. 34, there is a long line of interesting compositions, often showing remarkable treatment of Jewish melody. In Act 2 of the above mentioned work of Glinka, consisting of incidental music to Kukulnick's tragedy, is heard Rachel's song, an impassioned rhapsodic utterance bemoaning the sad lot of Israel, and voicing an insistent yearning for a return to the homeland Palestine. The simplicity and directness of the melody and harmony bespeak the composer's sympathetic treatment of the subject.

Most Russian composers derived their inspiration of Jewish music from the folk song and the Chassidic chants, rather

than from the ancient Biblical cantillations. This is particularly true of Moussorgsky, who more than any other composer showed a keen interest not only in Jewish music, but in the Jewish people as well. He was deeply moved by the pathos, fervor, and mystical exultation of the Hebrew religious chants and the folk song, in which the tragic and the humorous blend. Moussorgsky never missed an opportunity to hear Jewish Synagogue music. The melodies he heard he long remembered, and used them in his works. Of these impressions he writes to Stassov, "In Odessa, I went to the service at two Synagogues and enjoyed it greatly. I have heard two Israelite themes, one delivered by the Cantor, the other by the choir in the gallery, in unison; I shall never forget these two melodies as long as I live." In Jewish music Moussorgsky sensed an eloquent utterance of a people "disinherited by fate," and cruelly persecuted by the Czarist regime. He was proud to be their musical champion. He has left us many compositions inspired by Jewish subject and melody. One of the most sympathetic delineations of the Jew by a Gentile composer is his 6th number of the "Pictures at an Exhibition." How well Moussorgsky depicts the two Jews—"Samuel Goldenburg and Schmuyle"! In a note to Stassov, the composer declared, "I mean to try to get Hartman's Jews." The result is a magnificent example of his consummate skill. The melodies breathe the very essence of Jewish life. One melody, representing Goldenburg, is of pompous gravity, authoritative, the very essence of Rabbinical austerity; the other, Schmuyle, is nervous, pleading, embellished with Chassidic inflections. "These two types of the Warsaw ghetto," says one of Moussorgsky's leading biographers, "stand plainly before you,—you seem to hear the caftan of one of them blown by the wind, and the flap of the other's ragged fur cap." Moussorgsky's musical power of observation scores a triumph with his

unique musical joke; he proves that he can reproduce the intonations of human speech, not only for the voice but also for the piano. Other compositions of Moussorgsky based on authentic Jewish songs are his "Hebrew Songs" composed in the summer of 1866, while living with a Jewish family and listening to the chants of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacle. From the same family he heard a melody upon which he based his chorus, "The Destruction of Sennacherib." In the setting of an extract from Byron's "Hebrew Melodies," as well as in the gossip's story of the red waistcoat in "The Fair of Sorotchintzy," Moussorgsky employs Yiddish folk themes.

Rimsky-Korsakoff was fully aware of the great source of musical inspiration to be found in the Jewish folk melodies. He sympathized with the efforts and personally encouraged the group of young Jewish composers who organized the "Hebrew Folk Song Society" in 1908. "I am very glad," he told them, "to see your interest in the music of your own people. The Jewish race possesses a vast melodic treasure. Jewish music is waiting for its genius." Many years before, Rimsky Korsakoff in his "Hebrew Song," composed in 1870, captured the lyric and ecstatic fervor of the Jewish Chassidic melody.

In the above mentioned Overture, Sergei Prokofieff used two main themes, one a rapid, joyful, Chassidic dance tune and the other the poignant, melancholy folk tune—"Seit gensunter hait meine liebe eltern." As an extension of the first tune the composer interpolates the Shofar call,—the interval of a 4th at first, and later a 5th. The composer has caught the spiritual and lyric quality of the melodies. The whole treatment, however, the orchestral coloring and harmonic progressions, smacks more of Prokofieff's dash, brilliance, and incisiveness than of Jewish character.

Other Russian composers worth noting who have employed Jewish themes or



character are Rachmaninoff and Grechaninoff. The latter has set the original Hebrew texts to Psalms 97—"Adonoy Moloch," and 92—"Tovlehodos l'Adonoy." Of these works Joseph Yasser has written, "Grechaninoff" has availed himself of three basic elements important for the purpose: (1) motives that have a clear archaic structure, (2) harmonies in which may be heard certain echoes of the most primitive tonal combinations, and (3) rhythms that bear undoubted prosodic traces of the Hebrew language."

What general observations may be drawn from the works of non-Jewish composers in their treatment of Jewish melodies and subjects? With very few and rare exceptions Gentile composers have been unable to give a musical expression truly representative of Jewish sentiment and spirit. It is difficult, if not impossible, to immerse oneself and absorb the culture and spiritual heritage of another people. The mere use of an authentic Jewish mode, though that is obviously important, does not of itself make the composition as a whole Jewish. We are not living in an age of monody. Our musical fabric is more complex. The component elements of tonality, rhythm, harmonic devices, contrapuntal manipulation, orchestral timbre, and numerous other factors affect one another, and determine the nature and quality of the total composition. Gentile composers who have shown interest and attempted to create Jewish compositions, with few exceptions, have revealed at best an esoteric interest in one or two of the important ingredients of Jewish music, but have failed to transmute all its elements. Thus their work is of necessity esthetically incomplete.

The problem here involved is of greater and wider significance than the question of the degree of influence of Jewish melos upon the non-Jewish composer. What concerns us here is the effect of one ethnic group upon another. Can one absorb

quickly and effectively the cultural patterns of another group and make them his own? By the same token can one be uprooted from his cultural heritage and consciously express the sentiments and aspirations of his newly adopted environment? Are such creative somersaults possible? The answer to this is not to be found in evaluating the works of non-Jewish composers, although there too one finds numerous instances that negate any possibility of artistic naturalization. To cite but two well known examples: Dvorak's "New World Symphony" was recognized and acclaimed as a magnificent Czech "masterpiece," and Stravinsky's "Ragtime for Twelve Instruments" is but a diluted American jazz idiom, that anyone of a host of talented members of Tin Pan Alley can toss off at a moment's notice and with truer interpretation of the American genius.

The most remarkable instance of the inviolate continuity of national spirit and cultural entity is to be found in the Jewish people, the more extraordinary in view of long centuries of dispersion and persecution, social ostracism, pillage, and wholesale murder. Yet in spite of all this, definite national character and traits have remained. Unfortunately the latter have been diabolically distorted and shamefully misrepresented by the enemies of the Jews. Among the strongest manifestations of Jewish character have been their melody and song. Fortunately the Jewish creative artists did not heed the long bitter admonitions of their forbears who vowed never to sing in the stranger's land. Thus did the Psalmist exclaim:

"We hung our harps  
Upon the willows in the midst thereof  
.....  
How shall we sing the Lord's song  
In a strange land?"

On the contrary the Jews "have always found in song an outlet for their griefs, their temptations, their wrath." What is



most remarkable is the unbroken continuity of the tropal character of the Jewish melody. The modalism and the unmetrical character of ancient Hebrew music have left their imprint upon Jewish musicians. Some students of Jewish music go so far as to prove Wagner's Jewishness by the passionate fervor and unbridled ecstasy of some of the dramatic pages of his operas. These violent emotional outbursts of exultation and tragic despair are to Saminsky clearly Jewish traits. This may seem a bit far fetched but at least it is an interesting point of view.

In conclusion let it be said that although some non-Jewish composers have sympathetically, as well as scientifically and artistically treated Jewish melodies in their compositions, very few have really contributed to Jewish music. Others, especially in religious works, in settings for the Sacred Services have with very few

exceptions done little. In most cases these works have been part of their duties as organists. It was a part of their job to write liturgic works. You cannot create a work steeped in Jewish melody and tradition by reading and studying a number of services or examining anthologies of Jewish folk songs. One must drink deeply and long, nay, one must feel the inherent spirit of Jewish melody, as Bloch so eloquently stated, in one's heart and soul. It is for that reason that the outstanding contributions to Jewish music have come from Jewish composers themselves. As Idelsohn has written, "That great song, born of Jews, preserved by them, and in the course of centuries developed by them can continue to grow only through musicians born Jews, reared in a Jewish environment, steeped in Jewish folk lore and folk song, vibrant with Jewish emotion, sensitive to Jewish sorrows, joy, hopes, and convictions—faithful sons of Israel."

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## ON MORTALITY

By HAROLD APPLEBAUM

Let us be humble now this war is done—  
Let us give thanks for victory or gain,  
Survival or a place to rest. The sun  
Beats down, regardless, on the burnished plain,  
The stars still shine, the planets wheel, the rust  
On broken guns grows thick. The track of time  
Is changeless. Only Man resents the dust,  
For he would be immortal, be sublime.

Let us be wise, not trespassers in space  
We cannot rule. Let our great towers end,  
Our rockets miss the moon, our clamor cease.  
Let us respect the gods who speak of peace,  
Whose words are lightning, whose thunderings intend  
To keep the mortals in their mortal place.

# Ten Greatest Jewish Books

By LOUIS ZARA

SINCE TIMES IMMEMORIAL the Jews have been the "People of the Book." Even before the days of Moses they were the "Children of the Word," imbued from the days of the patriarchs' earliest wanderings with a sense of mission. They sought not conquest, nor hegemony, but the recognition of the idea of monotheism. The total experience of this group from the day that Abraham made his mystic covenant, to its dispersion into alien lands and its survival despite the terror that has pursued it, is without parallel. One can speculate at the fireside on whether we are a race or a religion, but this writer chooses to embrace the thought that Judaism is a culture, fond parent and sometimes proud, and often sad, teacher of the dominant Christian culture of the Western world.

From the yearnings of this desert tribe there arose a flow of literature which was so quickly absorbed that its authorship was forgotten. Inspired it certainly was, in the sense that every creative work is; how far The Finger moved the mortal pen is not our concern. We are content that the ideas did not perish.

Nearly three thousand years of effort have produced countless works. Various were collated as "the sacred," meaning at the least, the select. Certain of these stood out as enduring personalities, as alive and with as definite an aura as though they were human; semi-divine, when we think of the mediocre level of our attainments. Periodically it is worthwhile to take stock of that ancient heritage. That is the purpose of the present essay.

Struggling to elude the lash, the stake, and the convert's wafer, the Jew in the Diaspora fled from himself as often as he fled from his persecutors. (That centrifugal force may be responsible for the mild anti-Semitism which is such a bad-humored guest in the better-fed Jewish circles.) Furthermore, the Children of the Word expressed themselves in many languages, and in the name of security wore numerous motley cloaks. Their spiritual and intellectual gifts produced astonishing tomes. Yet many of these, though great indeed, were not especially Jewish in content. For that reason neither Freud, nor Marx, nor Spinoza, nor Einstein is included here. They are ours, but their books are of the world. For the moment we seek not books by Jews, but "Jewish books."

The following list is offered not dogmatically but to encourage further thought:

First comes *The Hebrew Bible*, commonly called "The Old Testament." Truly it is of the world and not the special property of our group. But to the Jew, though he be enlightened enough to pay his literary respects to the Four Gospels, the Bible means the great compilation which includes the Five Books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, The Books of Samuel, The Books of Kings, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Psalms, the Book of Proverbs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, The Twelve Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, The Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

What can we add to that index? A moral code is presented nowhere with as much clarity as in Exodus. For poetry, The Psalms; and the Book of Job will yield to none, not even to the exalted Vedas of India. The message of the entire Bible in poetry and in prose, in fable, allegory, and song, has raised it above any similar epic, and made it a unique legacy from antiquity.

To this writer the characterizations in these pages are the greatest in literature, for while reaching toward man's ultimate, they probe the depths of the human soul, sparing nothing to portray living creatures as they are and have been since recorded time. To dwell on only a handful: Joseph the diplomat, Moses the leader, David the poet-king, Joshua the soldier, and Jeremiah the prophet, delineate the many facets of Hebrew personality and the conflicts that have always raged below the surface.

Second, *The Talmud*. A second time Jewish leaders compiled the treasures of their thinking. Two Talmuds were written, one completed in Palestine in 390, the other in Babylon in about 490. It is the second, "The Babylonian Talmud," that has been the closest to us. Each contained a *Mishnah*, or legal code, set down with astonishing brevity, and a *Gemara*, which offered discursive and digressive commentaries on the laws, reaching from medicine to agriculture to biology. Six categories were created, containing sixty-two tractates. Various commentaries were added later.

Many a time the volumes were indicted at the behest of provocateurs who chose to malign and misinterpret. Indeed, these are perhaps the world's most frequently suppressed and burned books. Sometimes the Jews were forbidden by the lords of the land to read them. Yet even more than the Bible the Talmud was responsible for the survival of the people in exile. It was sanctuary and recreation, a shield and a study, so that the Jews never

knew any "Dark Ages," except when their neighbors descended upon them, as they did more often than it is pleasant to recall. Is it any wonder that the very pages of the folios have been cherished and, by tradition, are never destroyed but are reverently committed to the earth?

Third, *The Prose and Poetry of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*. When the Moslems ruled Spain the Jews partook of freedom and created a vast culture. Ibn Gabirol was the poet of whom Heinrich Heine, whose own lyrics are unparalleled in western poesy, said, "He was a nightingale singing in the darkness of the medieval night." His poems are still the jewels of the Hebrew liturgy. His little volume of philosophy, *Fons Vitae*, or the *Fountain of Life*, was long accredited to Avicenna, a Church Father. Now we know that it came from Ibn Gabirol's joyous pen. He died at the age of Keats and Shelley; surely he was of their stature.

Fourth, *The Poetry of Judah Halevi*. He, too, flourished in the sun of Spain in the eleventh century. His love poems rival "The Song of Songs," and his religious expressions still enrich the Hebrew Prayer-book. His passion for Zion was responsible for some of his own most fervent poetic efforts. He perished after a journey to the Holy Land. Not since the days of the Psalmist had there been such inspired song.

Fifth, *A Guide for the Perplexed* by Maimonides. Native of Cordoba, Moses ben Maimon was born in 1135. Even before he reached maturity in Africa he was acknowledged a distinguished scholar. A practising doctor, he became in 1185 court physician to the friendly Saladin, ruler of Egypt. After ten years of work he completed his codification of all Biblical and rabbinical law, generally known as the *Mishnah-Torah*. That made him the leading Jewish authority of his day. He followed Aristotle and Saadiah Gaon in seeking the rule of reason to justify

the teachings of Judaism. In 1190 he completed his *Guide For the Perplexed*. While the mystics revolted against it, the book was a rock upon which the intellect-worshippers could rest.

Sixth, *The Commentary of Rashi*. Solomon Ben Isaac was his name. Adding the title Rabbi gave him the cognomen "Rashi," abbreviating by the use of the Hebrew initial letters. He was perhaps the greatest Hebrew editor of the centuries, for he sought always to pare away the non-essentials and to clarify every text in Bible and Talmud. To thousands of students he has been endeared if only by his engaging custom of admitting it bluntly when he did not know the meaning of some obscure point. To this day his commentary is included in every authoritative edition of the great books.

Seventh, *The Zohar*. Mysticism as a natural strain in the human animal must be respected by every tolerant rationalist, though it is often difficult to follow its contortions and one cannot help but suspect its meanderings. *The Book of Creation* was perhaps the parent of Kabbala speculation. Then in the thirteenth century Moses de Leon brought forth *The Zohar* which he claimed had really been written eleven hundred years earlier by a mystic sage. Its intentions were good but it worshipped the obscure, diverted the intelligent from worthier work, and befuddled the ignorant. Unfortunately it helped to make the suffering Jewish masses a prey to every charlatan who claimed to be the long awaited Messiah.

Eighth, *The Shulchan Aruch*, "The Prepared Table" of Joseph Caro. This sixteenth century work became the most respected authority in modern Judaism. It was issued, after thirty-two years of astonishing labors, as a comprehensive

standard guide to the ritual. Appearing in 1567, the spread of printing helped enormously to popularize it. Not since the days of the compilation of the Talmud had a single code been accepted by a majority of the Jewish people. Now the unlettered, as well as the learned, could know where they stood in the enormous welter of religious and legal practices. The book became a household word, for it strove not to delight with speculative reasoning, but to make the road of daily living clear.

Ninth, *Jerusalem* by Moses Mendelssohn. The distinguished eighteenth century philosopher replied to his critics with a powerful essay in which he established the basic tolerance of the Jewish faith and set down his views on the functions of church and state. Although to Orthodox believers he remained almost a heretic he let air and light into the mind of the masses. From his thinking in this and other works stemmed the "reformed" position of Judaism.

Tenth, *The Jewish State* by Theodore Herzl. Had the prophet Moses been obliged to indulge in written polemics, without benefit of miracles, he might have produced such a work as that which Theodore Herzl wrote in 1896, entitled "The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question." Contemporary Zionism began with this exposition. Herzl was the most dramatic Jewish figure of modern times.

Glancing back, this compiler realizes that there is an unevenness in the contents of the books chosen. How else could it be? For each came forth in its day to fill a special need, to arouse and to awaken, to link hands with the great tradition and to move forward with surefootedness and confidence into the veiled future.



# Some American Jewish Novelists

By BROM WEBER

## I

THE AMERICAN-JEWISH novelist has lately been undergoing a critical examination. And the doctors' criticisms and advices have not been favorable to his peace of mind. The most important of the critiques revolves about his integration with American life. It is claimed that he does not yet possess those deep roots in our native grounds which are presumed to be a requisite for great art. Interestingly enough, this diagnosis has not come from anti-Semitic baiters, but from American Jewish critics such as Alfred Kazin and Louis Kronenberger.

The implications of this criticism, if it be accepted at face value, are disheartening indeed. One does not have to worry about those novelists who have already established themselves or are approaching the close of their careers. But younger American Jewish writers may well question the practicability of continuing with creative work if racial origins automatically operate as barriers to artistic success and realization.

The literary doctors have sought to soften the impact of their remarks by assuring everyone that the process of assimilation is well-nigh complete. As a result of this assimilation, we are further told, the advent of indigenous American writing from the New Jew is to be expected shortly. Unfortunately, these assurances do not jibe with the available evidence. There can be no denying that the greater part of American Jewry is experiencing a revival of Jewish consciousness. A current public opinion poll, for example, revealed that almost three-quarters of the American Jewish population favored Zionism. So it would seem

that the assimilationist millenium is not yet at hand.

The novelist who is Jewish as well as American, then, faces a problem of genuine concern. Can he or can he not achieve that measure of creative richness which Melville or Dostoyevsky enjoyed? A definitive answer to this question is not available now. Meanwhile, this paper is an effort to throw additional light on the factors which will go to make up the answer. Five American Jewish novelists—Albert Halper, Meyer Levin, Ludwig Lewisohn, Albert Maltz, and Nathanael West—were chosen at random for brief analysis. Their selection does not, of course, imply a negative judgment of Waldo Frank, Louis Zara, and the others who must undoubtedly be included in any definitive study of the American Jewish novelist.

Some of the writers chosen—Maltz, for example—may not fancy a concern with their Jewishness any more than they would welcome a survey of their bank balances. On the other hand, Halper has stated: "I as a writer, as a Jewish writer, do not think I am the same as my Christian colleagues." Both reactions are equally valid. On aesthetic grounds, it might be more desirable to relate the naturalism of Halper with that of James T. Farrell, the poetic-philosophic fiction of West with that of William Faulkner. We shall do that to a limited extent, it is true. Nevertheless, the inescapable pressure of history and such living forces as the nativist reaction require us to take into account the writer's Jewishness as both a contributory and constituent element in his work.

## II

The accidental death of Nathanael West in 1940 removed an important American Jewish novelist from the literary scene. Still in his early thirties, West had written four novels in which his ambitions and achievements were foreshadowings of future greatness. He was overpowered by the horror and misery of American life, and his books alternately satirize, describe, recoil from, and condemn the panorama. Two of West's novels were experimental. *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (1931) was a surrealist exercise in hallucinatory visions and phantasmagoria after the manner of Rimbaud and Lautreamont. In *A Cool Million* (1934), West satirized the traditional American success concept of Horatio Alger.

But in *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), West revealed that mastery which places him, because of his unfulfilled promise, in the front rank of secondary American novelists. Dreams, verbal rhetoric, brilliant imagery, and a brooding sense of frightful intensity are imaginatively blended and controlled by the author. The locale might be any American city, for the speakeasies, newspaper offices, and apartments are not described in minute detail. And the theme might just as easily be the philosophic quest of any sensitive American for moral and spiritual values in a world of pain.

Specifically, the expressions of genuine suffering revealed in the inarticulate, semi-literate letters written by the city's frustrated and crippled drive the writer of an advice-to-the-lovelorn column close to distraction in his efforts to arrive at some means of alleviation. West reviews many of the solutions offered for stopping this torment of mind and body, and only seems to find a semblance of meaning in the ironic murder of the columnist by a crippled letter-writer.

Following several years of labor in the Hollywood film mills, West produced *The*

*Day of the Locust* (1939). The social setting of this novel is recognizable and more attention is placed on plot than on psychological analysis of character. Nevertheless, the pervasive mood throughout is that of unreality. In attaining this effect, West created a tour de force. For what could reveal more of the essence of Hollywood than a book in which the characters appear to be flat, cardboard shadows acting in front of fake scenery?

Few novelists have unveiled the corruption of the motion picture town as vividly, or as relentlessly tracked down the validity of Hollywood and California myths. The chaotic architecture, the distorted interior decoration, the sexual maladjustment, the artistic poverty, and the social ferment of the Pacific Coast are portrayed with insight and deep feeling. Absorbing situations sketch the California combination of dietary fads, religious fanaticism, and political demagoguery which bursts out in frequent mob violence and intolerance.

The good old American dream which inspires people to save their pennies and slave a lifetime is denounced. For they don't enjoy the golden sunshine and they can't digest much of the California fruits. Like a majority of the people, these migrants "haven't the mental equipment for leisure, the money nor the physical equipment for pleasure." Fed by the press, movies, and demagogues on a strong diet of violent passions and distorted situations, they "burn with resentment" and form a group susceptible to the blandishments of native fascism.

## III

Meyer Levin is a writer in whose work, like that of West, there is a determined searching for answers. He too satirizes and condemns those trends and individuals for whom he has no admiration. Unlike West, however, a feeling for the topical is paramount in Levin. One would

not be likely to mistake the locale of *The Old Bunch* (1937), or *Citizens* (1940), for anything but Chicago. *Miss Lonelyhearts*, on the other hand, possesses a philosophic universality of theme and character which makes it timeless in its effect. Perhaps the temporal quality prevails in Levin's fiction because of the impress of his personality. In *The Old Bunch*, for example, it seems that he has not digested his impressions and experiences, and that he gives them to us almost as they occurred.

*The Old Bunch* is Levin's first important novel. It tells of the growth to maturity of a group of Chicago Jewish youngsters in the 1920's and early 1930's. Their growth is the unfolding of the pattern of Jewish middle-class life. One character enters his father's business . . . another becomes a doctor . . . the majority becomes lawyers . . . some slip into the working-class . . . one becomes a sculptor . . . and most of the women marry. None of the characters in this collective novel is made of living flesh, however, and the interplay of themes and trends is particularly noticeable. The infiltration of radicalism, the conflict between Communism and Zionism, the extent to which the culture of Eastern European Jewry offers a future to the American Jew—these and similar current issues are painted. Levin comments critically on these ideologies and panaceas, so that we know what he thinks. Like their creator, his characters find no answer to their need for moral truths.

In *Citizens*, Levin continues his inquiries. The theme has narrowed down, however, to the politico-economic sphere. Once again, the novel is a collective portrait, this time of the people whose lives were touched by the Republic Steel Massacre of 1937. But in this work Levin has expanded his canvas from Jewish middle-class life to include characters more representative of America, even though the central character is a Jewish doctor,

Mitchell Wilner. Having wandered fortuitously into the heart of the strike which developed into the killing of unarmed strikers, Wilner plays the role of a pawn against whom various problems of political and economic democracy are brought to bear. Like many of his counterparts in real life, Wilner doesn't reach any decisions. Will it be political action by labor, benevolent paternalism from Washington, or revolutionary action by minor political parties? Avoidance of the editorial commentary which was so evident in *The Old Bunch*, *Citizens* was a step forward in Levin's effort to illuminate living history.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that Levin has transformed life into fiction as, for example, has John Dos Passos. For the cumulative effect of Levin's work is that of social history. Dos Passos has certainly anchored his work on actual events, people, and currents. But he has also imaginatively transformed those actualities, so that his characters move about in situations whose emotional and intellectual significances vary in tension and emphasis. The novelist only at this point becomes a creative artist, rather than a mere reporter.

#### IV

The fiction of Albert Maltz is a paradoxical creation. Despite his close ties with the American Communists, Maltz has never manifested the distorting tricks of the "proletarian" novelists. He has pursued his course with a willingness to experiment and mature which is rare in those writers. In his work, moreover, there is no reliance upon mystical symbols such as "the strike," or upon threats growled on last pages such as: "Some day. Some day there'll come a day." On the contrary, Maltz genuinely attempts to grasp the essence of his material and to present it with craft. If he is still learning the craft of writing, that is a weakness which is capable of elimination.

The short stories in *The Way Things Are* (1938) possess a powerful impact. In a style bare of adornment and emotion, Maltz gives a vivid picture of the depths to which the human animal fell during the economic depression. Unemployment, poverty, loneliness, and suffering are common themes in these stories. Included is the famous story which helped make the country aware of silicosis disease. Although the characters are taut with pain, they nonetheless maintain a stoical dignity which intensifies their predicaments. Here are no political dummies whipped through their dialectical paces in accordance with the latest tune. Maltz has achieved a unique objectivity which makes these stories extremely dramatic.

His first novel, therefore, is a disappointment. *The Underground Stream* (1940) represents a retrogression to the theological "proletarian" novel. It deals with the trials of a Communist union functionary involved in the rising tide of industrial unionism in Detroit. No effort is made to paint a broad picture of CIO development or its effect upon those industries with which the CIO clashed. Instead, as in *The Way Things Are*, Maltz is primarily interested in people. As a result, he has made his work serve as the story of what is essentially a religious struggle, a modern Temptation. We have here the record of that spiritual strength with which a Communist clings to his "faith" in the face of evil enticements offered by Fascist terrorists.

It would be impossible to deny that Maltz has out-done the majority of radical novelists in presenting the Communist mentality. Here is the martyr complex, the stoical adherence to ill-digested articles of faith, and the virtue of obedience. But in place of the tough vitality of his stories, he has substituted melodramatic devices and poorly-conceived characters and settings. Scenes of upper-class social and domestic life are shallow and unreal. Characters walk to the windows and press

their feverish heads against the glass panes as in the most mawkish fiction. The objectivity of his stories is, too, stretched into the ludicrous. The Fascist leader, for example, is treated without bias by showing that he grieves for his dead wife and suffers from internal pains. Despite these weaknesses, there are evidences of his future development. Such potentiality may be seen in the passionate and sincere love affair of the Communist and his wife in which, with its tragic conclusion, there is no trace of banality.

## V

The novels of Ludwig Lewisohn are the consistent expression of an extreme individualism. This individualism is intense and courageous, impelled by a liberal idealism which is inspiring because of its rarity. What characterizes Lewisohn still further is that he does not grope for answers to problems. He has those answers and offers them continually in almost each of his numerous novels.

*The Island Within* (1928) is an absorbing novel and Lewisohn's greatest. Through its pages flows the history of modern American middle-class Jewry. From Poland to Germany to the United States, where they settle, we follow the progress of a Jewish family. There is much to learn from Lewisohn's account of Jewish life in Europe. It is in the United States, however, that those problems and aspirations which had a superficial aspect in Europe rise to the level of real conflict. A young Jewish student is the protagonist who in his person experiences the aches and sorrows which Lewisohn sees as the Jewish lot. He grows to maturity, discovers the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism, becomes a professional man, and marries a Christian writer. Both as intellectual and husband, he is unable to adjust himself. Finally, he resolves against assimilation with urban American culture as a solution to those problems which Jews as Jews face.



Where *The Island Within* was objective and ordered in its presentation, impressive in its marshalling of feeling and idea, Lewisohn's later works suffer from a compulsion to handle repetitive themes. Sexual incompatibility is one of these subjects which concern him greatly. He has written about it from almost every conceivable approach, and in almost every case displayed bias against the woman. *The Island Within* treated the problem from the standpoint of intermarriage. Stephen Escott (1930) considers sexual maladjustment in two typical American families: the bourgeois family, and the artist married to a dumb but beautiful woman. Incompatibility in the lives of two artistic poseurs is handled in *An Altar In The Fields* (1934). Reading these books, one might begin to doubt that the middle-class Christian woman is capable of love and passion. Furthermore, with what strikes us as a heavy-handed attempt at making a definition, there is always a philosophical Jew or a happily-married Jewish couple to point up the flimsiness of bourgeois American morality. The issue reaches amazing proportions in *Breathe Upon These* (1944). Here we are presented with a middle-class American woman living in a middle-west city. Dissatisfied with her husband, she is gradually becoming estranged from him. However, the arrival of a Jewish refugee scientist and his wife with a moving tale of Jewish heroism and sacrifice so inspires her that once again she feels a stirring for her husband.

What may be called an obsession with certain aspects of American life has made Lewisohn a vigorous polemicist rather than a novelist. For his works suffer greatly from unrealized characters, and a general feeling that the author's guide strings have not been pulled out of the completed novel. One regrets that Lewisohn's artistry has been subordinated to his intellectual interests. But it is important to remember that Lewisohn's achieve-

ments parallel important movements in American literature. His illumination of bourgeois morality goes hand-in-hand with Sherwood Anderson's Freudian revelations, and his re-discovery of the Jewish heritage is similar to the re-discovery of Emerson's, Whitman's, and Melville's legacy to American culture.

## VI

The fiction of Albert Halper might well bear out the truth of Thoreau's classical remark in the *Walden* essay on "Economy:" "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." But whereas Thoreau approached the frustrated lives of the American people with a systematic philosophy, Halper is impelled primarily by deep sympathy and love:

I am sorry for many things in life. I am sorry for the small folk who live their twisted lives, who have to hold on to their jobs and look alive when the big chief passes by. I am sorry for the broken men who stand against buildings when the wind howls down the street and the snow whirls past the arc lamps. (*Chicago Side Show*, 1932.)

Halper is a writer in whom one immediately senses wells of emotion, just as in Lewisohn one discerns intellectuality.

Halper's sensibility permeates each of his novels. His concern with his characters is so great that he devotes most of his effort to portraying them as they exist. They move through the daily round of life beaten and pushed, staggering about in a world they neither make nor understand. But Halper's people do not wallow in sentimental slush, nor are they mechanically set up to prove a thesis. Their suffering is real and borne out by the situations in which they survive or perish. The general mood is that of pathos, although frequently a figure of heroic stature, such as the union leader of *The Foundry* (1934), is introduced.

But this compassion has taken a certain toll from Halper's creative stature. So powerful have been its effects upon

him, that he has involuntarily relied upon it to carry his novels along. As a result, in the absence of selected emphases, the pace of his work is dragging and the style flat and banal. One feels that there is a basic flaccidity in the novels which even the seductions, murders, deaths, and suicides cannot dispel. It is almost as if Halper had decided to dispense with the imaginative. This may explain the failure of his latest novel, *Only An Inch From Glory* (1943), where great imaginative perception was required to deal with a problem of limited scope and time, and for which it appears that his usual episodic technique was insufficient.

Halper's vision of the novelist is of someone who mirrors his times. Like James T. Farrell, his propensity is towards the naturalistic presentation of his age with the firm belief that its significance, in Halper's case the destruction of the individual, will be grasped by the reader. Where Meyer Levin believes that the facts of recorded history offer the best means of achieving that goal, Halper continues to use autobiographical material. As a result, Halper's reflection of his time deals with that lower middle-class life in Chicago (*Sons of the Fathers*, 1940) from which he sprung, and with those workers in foundries, mail order houses, post offices whom he met in the course of earning a living (*The Chute*, 1934; *The Foundry*).

The subject matter of Halper's novels has caused him to be mistakenly labelled a "proletarian" novelist. If by "proletarian" is meant a crude manipulation of working-class characters and radical dogma to provide a revolutionary call to action, nothing could be more misleading. Halper's role in American literature has been precisely that which he predicted for himself in an early sketch written before 1932: in a "raw slangy" manner, he has reflected and illuminated an American life that is lived "raw slangy" and not in the "classic tradition."

## VII

The five novelists we have briefly considered, like other American writers of Jewish origin, concern themselves primarily with urban life. This concentration on one aspect of modern life is not an anomaly. American Jewry is largely centered in the country's metropolitan areas. The novelist grows to maturity in the city, and finds his meaning, his agony, and his subject there. With the natural inclination for autobiographical self-expression that has come to mark the novel of the past few decades, the writer transmutes the city into fiction.

Has the American Jewish writer failed to reflect and illuminate the American urban scene? Our review of these five writers doesn't indicate that. West has shown us the predicament of the sensitive moralist in urban America. Levin's prose clearly delineates the existence of the bourgeois American, and Halper sets forth the patterns of lower middle-class and working-class life. In the case of Lewisohn, it must be admitted that he has pointed up certain problems to the exclusion of accompanying issues. Maltz most obviously displays inadequate knowledge and understanding of a portion of American urban life, although he is familiar with the working class.

If there is any failure to be found in these writers, it may be that not all have succeeded artistically. With the exception of West, flaws in craftsmanship are visible in their novels. This lack of success on an aesthetic level may be discerned, similarly, in the prose fiction of other American Jewish novelists. In our estimation, this artistic weakness has been mistaken for other weaknesses by the nativist critics. But are we to conclude that American Jewish novelists have cornered the market on second-rate creative qualities? How many *great* non-Jewish novelists can be found in American literature of the twentieth century? Henry James, Dreiser, possibly Hemingway or Faulkner.

Just as the American Jewish novelist has no monopoly of the position of minor novelist, neither does he, except for Lewisohn, reveal more of a pervasive Jewishness than the non-Jewish writer. Although Halper deals sympathetically with Jewish themes, Maltz is completely unconcerned. Levin is critical of bourgeois Jewry, whereas West touches Jews only once when he casually reports a conversation about Jewish control of the motion picture industry. Those who apply the epithet "parochial" to the Jewish writer completely ignore the fact that the Maltzes, Levins, Ferbers, Wests, Fasts, Kantors, and Appels display a sensibility which in no wise stamps them as parochial writers. Maxwell Anderson, Hemingway, and even Shakespeare have dealt with Jewish themes and characters, but no one calls them parochial. It is important, for example, that after writing a book dealing with Jews (*The Old Bunch*), Levin wrote *Citizens* which portrays current political and economic issues better than almost any other contemporary novel. These petulant critics would go so far as to have writers ignore that with which they are familiar or in which they are interested. Surely the American Jew, if he does become a novelist's subject, is as much a part of the American scene as Faulkner's Southerners and Anderson's Westerners!

Moreover, for most American Jewish writers there is no such thing as a cultural Jewish heritage which might parochialize their work. Of eleven representative men and women who contributed to a symposium on the younger generation of American Jewish writers, only a handful were able to trace Judaism within their own thought and growth. Only a similar small number, however, rejected or ignored the particular social and political heritage to which the Jewish writer succeeds.

This legacy is what really identifies the American Jewish novelist, for it bears

directly on the problems with which he must cope. The novelist's materials are composed of all that goes to make up the lives of human beings. People are primary. Their emotions and deaths . . . their conflicts and adventures . . . their interaction in an environment composed of physical elements and forces—this is the stuff of prose fiction. The novelist, then, must live in a world from which he can extract his substance and play over it his individual imagination and talent. Where the critic or journalist, for example, can specialize in abstract concepts, the novelist must begin with and adhere to the concrete and real.

Burdened with the social status of the alien, belonging as it were to the out-group, the American Jewish novelist does not find himself automatically in a ready-made world. At first glance, this does not appear to be unique. Christian mystics like William Blake have been forced to construct new worlds for themselves. With other writers the process has been truly agonizing, as with Rimbaud, who destroyed the conventional limits of his perceptions so that he might through violation of his organism find a new existence. But these artists had the vantage of a starting point. They worked from the inside out in the true method of artistic creation. This sloughing-off of social, physical, and spiritual restraints is a procedure leading to the understanding of life and to self-discovery as well.

Unlike those artists, the American Jewish novelist does not have that firm center from which to sally forth. This center or frame of reference he must build. But these laboriously-constructed worlds are unstable, whether the writer is in flight from them or seeks to pursue them. Where the novelist has accepted exclusion from the dominant culture pattern, as has Ludwig Lewisohn, he may be forced to reconcile himself to the role of outcast instead of prophet. Where he has imagined himself integrated into the fab-

ric of American mores, there may come the painful realization that the adjustment has been exceedingly tenuous. If he has staked his hopes, like Maltz, in the elimination of socio-economic insecurity as a means of attaining brotherhood, there may come an awareness that the tensions in man which predispose towards cruelty and intolerance will not be eradicated mechanically upon the advent of a socialist order.

The Jewish writer's instability is an intensification of man's alienation from life and purpose in a harsh and mechanized world. It is a social isolation, a sense of not-belonging, which has harmful effects. Neuroticism . . . an absorption in a synthetic past . . . superficial rebellion . . . adherence to external sources of strength such as foreign powers or quack fads . . . these and other residues offer none of that mental and physical well-being which the writer like other men requires.

On the other hand, there are beneficial results from this Jewish legacy. There is the awareness of meaning on a broader scale than the insider can ordinarily perceive. There is an increased sensitivity to the details that compose this difficult life and to life's injustice in its various forms. There is always the catalyst of anti-semitism to keep the mind and conscience at fever-pitch.

The rootedness of the American Jewish novelist, then, is a specious question. His relationship to American life and literature is as close now as is the relationship of non-Jewish writers. In some cases, he is even developing an eye for

genuine Duncan Phyfe furniture and an ear for local dialect, although that is hardly a criterion for evaluating a writer's perception of his times. But even assuming that the writer is not fully assimilated into American life, that he is still making his world, we do not believe it to follow logically that his reaction to national trends, character, or issues is invalid or limited in scope. The depth and quality of understanding is as important as knowledge of many otherwise superficial details.

The problem of roots has two unpleasant aspects, But their very nature makes it inevitable that this specious issue will not bother us very much in the future. First, it must be realized that some of those who have beaten the Jewish novelist with "roots" have done so as the manifestation of a creative and social inferiority complex. The confidence and artistic vitality of the practicing Jewish novelist will soon place the masochistic critics into the background. Secondly, the tragic depression into which the United States plunged deeply, together with the rest of the world, has brought about a drum-beating revival of an extreme nationalism. This nationalism, fortified by war-time need for unity and patriotism, has penetrated every phase of cultural life and warped the perspective of many otherwise solid critics and artists. We can count on the gathering disillusionment which is following the war just concluded, once again to permit the evaluation of creative art in the light of universal principles rather than the most vulgar patrioteering.

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*The study of the history of Europe during the past centuries teaches us one uniform lesson: That the nations which have received and in any way dealt fairly and mercifully with the Jew have prospered; and that the nations that have tortured and oppressed him have written out their own curse.*

OLIVE SCHREINER



# *And What Did You Do Sammy?*

(A PLAY; ONE ACT, ONE SCENE, AND ONE PURPOSE)

By MAX ALTH

*The time is the present. The scene is laid in the Bronx.*

The air is still hot from July's sun and filled with all those pungent odors that are dear to those born to them, and the familiar noise that makes the new-comer say, "My God, what a racket," and the Bronxite: "I like the Bronx because it is so quiet." Moma has opened all the windows in the flat and drawn the curtains aside. Perhaps the weak apartment house-blocked breeze could be induced to enter. The day is gone, but Moma hasn't turned on the lights. Her boy, Sammy, is back and in her own words he is her light. He is sitting in his sun-tan uniform across the kitchen table from his mother. He sits stiffly, shyly. His home is still a little strange to him. He is surprised that it should have remained exactly as he left it, and a bit dismayed as he realizes that the pre-war life he was returning to hadn't always been perfect.

Have another piece of cake, Sammy.

No thanks, Ma, I have had all I can eat.

You want a bath, huh?

No Ma, later perhaps. Just now I am glad to be home. Glad that the war is over and that I can be home and stay home, here in the Bronx.

Ah Sammy! You never used to like it here in the Bronx. You always used to like it better in the country. Remember when you used to say that you would buy some day a farm, huh, Sammy?

I remember, Ma.

Remember I told you that you better first think about getting married. Remember?

I remember, Ma.

For many minutes silence ensues. Street noises drift back into the room. Both think back through the years. They are glad to be together, yet both of them feel like strangers in each other's presence.

Your letters, Sammy. So little. You should have written more, Sammy. You should have told me more, Sammy. Your mother would understand.

What should I have written, Mom? That I was cold and miserable. That I wanted to be home with you. That you wouldn't want to hear.

And why not, Sammy? You are my son; my flesh and blood. What happens to you also happens to me, Sammy. What happens to you, any little thing also happens to me, Sammy.

Moma, there is so much to tell and so little too. Everything I can tell you in two words—it is over, all over.

Moma doesn't answer. She sits quietly, happy to have her son once again with her. For her this is victory; life. But there is something she wants to know.

You did not marry?

No Moma. That marrying business is strictly for fall guys, not for me.

No, Sammy? No, Sammy? Ha ha!

Well, not right away anyhow, Moma.

And those foreign countries? How were they, Sammy? You like better the old country or here, Sammy?

Oh, cripes, those—those foreign places are all right for a visit, Moma, but not to live in. Give me the good old Bronx any time.

And Germany, Sammy? How was Germany?

Well, it is pretty beautiful around the Rhine, and the little places are still in pretty good shape, but all the big cities are really beat up. Kaput but good!

What did you do there, Sammy? You were also fighting with the Germans.

Well, not exactly fighting, Moma. You see I was with the engineers. We sort of built the roads and the bridges and things. We didn't exactly fight.

But the boys who were killed beside you? Mrs. Mahoney's John, who lost a leg. Isn't that fighting, Sammy?

Well, yes and no. We were working on a bridge at the time, like I wrote Mrs. Mahoney. The Germans were firing from the other side of some hills. We didn't see them and we didn't stop working to shoot back. But when the bridge was built our men used it to get back at them. We helped a lot, Ma. Our outfit was cited twice and my buddy got the silver star.

So all through the war you did not see the Germans?

We saw plenty of Germans. The prisoners and the civilians when they would come back to their shelled towns.

And what did you do to the prisoners, Sammy?

Why nothing, Ma! They were prisoners of war, Ma. You don't do nothing to prisoners of war.

And the people? When they come back to their houses? What did you do?

Nothing, Ma. You just ignore them. You know. You don't fraternize, you don't talk to them.

You let them come back to the houses and live? Just like that, Sammy. You didn't do anything to them. Nothing?

What could I do, Ma? You can't shoot unarmed people. Civilians, little kids.

And what is the difference with your uncle, Sammy? What did he do that the Germans should kill him? Ha? What did his girls do, that the Germans should do to them who knows what, that they should kill themselves, ha, Sammy?

I know, Ma.

I would have torn their eyes out. I would have run them over with a jeep. I would have done, I know not what!

That is what I should have done, Sammy? You should have at least broken their house. Made it so that they would never be strong again, for a million years.

I know, Ma.

You did nothing, Sammy? You did just what they told you to do?

Well, I tried, Ma. Once when we were working on a road a sniper, in a farm house a few hundred yards away that overlooked the entire road, shot at us. I and some of the rest of the boys returned the fire, and went up to the house. There was a woman and a child in the house. We looked all through it. No one else was there. The sniper must have left by the back door and hid in the fields somewhere. We didn't have time to stop and look further. We had to go back to working on the road. A lot of stuff was moving over it. It was an important road. Before I left the farm house, I set fire to it. I wanted it to burn down. Because the woman had helped the sniper get away, if she hadn't done the shooting herself. When we got back to the road, our captain was waiting for us in his jeep. He just pointed to the smoke.

What is making that smoke?

I told him that I had set the house afire because someone had been sniping at us from it.

We are here as conquerors, not oppressors, Cohen. Government agencies already set up will decide at future conventions on the extent of German reparations. They will see to it that these people pay for their crimes. That is their job, not yours. Take some men and put the fire out.

I had to put it out.

And for all the months and all the years you suffered in the army, you did nothing to them, Sammy? You yourself did nothing?

Nothing, Ma. When I was told to cut some trees down, I would cut the biggest and best, as many as I could, no matter how few we needed. That was all I did, Ma.

# Landsmann Theme in Yiddish-American Literature

By BORUCH GLASSMAN

(Definition of basic terms used in this article:

*Landsmanschaft-Verein* is a society organized and named in accordance with the old-world place of birth or residence of its members.

*Landsmann*: Literally, fellow-countryman; in usage, fellow-townsmen.

*Landsleit*: Plural of *Landsmann*, meaning, fellow-townsmen.)

LANDSMANSCHAFT societies and associations made their appearance on the American scene many years ago. We know of one such association which is more than fifty years of age. In Yiddish-American literature, however — that freshly-budding branch of world Yiddish letters — the landsmanschaft theme, as was to be expected, did not appear until a later period.

At first Jewish immigration from the East European countries—and only these countries provided human material for the associations that subsequently formed in America—made their way to this country in small numbers. They were at once absorbed by their new environment. It was only about fifty years ago, in the nineties of the last century, that powerful waves of immigrants began sweeping the American shores.

But it took many more years before this new and prolific immigration settled down in its American homeland in a manner that allowed it to crystallize organizationally into definite leagues and associations. The longing of the newcomer for his old-world home first had to transform itself into a creative feeling before the landsmanschaft associations could begin playing an important role, in a social and economic sense, in the life of

the Jewish-American masses. Only then could they attract the observant eye of the Yiddish-American writer.

Hence the landsmanschaft theme is scarcely met with in the work of the pioneer Yiddish writers of America such as Kobrin, Libin, Levin, etc. More than the later generations of writers, these pioneer authors concerned themselves with the faithful reproduction of the life of the immigrants; they followed the newcomers step by step—in their strenuous economic struggles, their painful attempts to adapt themselves to a new land, their new-grown ambitions and aspirations, their colossal achievements as well as failures. However, in doing so they were for the most part concerned with the life of the immigrant as an *individual*; they brought him into literature in his atomized individual state.

The early immigrant felt himself utterly at a loss in his new environment. He was completely immersed in personal problems of adjusting himself to new ways of life—he experienced the agonies of breaking with the old customs and habits after he had reached adulthood and these same habits and customs had hardened . . . The value of landsmanschaft groupings was as yet little understood; their necessity was not felt. Everyone among the immigrants was still in the "greenhorn" stage—older and already adjusted immigrants were lacking who could take the newcomers under their wing and thus assist in the adjustment process of their fellow-townsmen from the "old country."

David Ignatov, in his novel, *Af Vaite Vegen* (On Distant Roads), describes the

nature of the immigration toward the end of the nineteenth century in the following manner:

The scanty Jewish groups consisted at that time, for the most part, of runaway bankrupt shopkeepers, fugitive conscripts, unsuccessful semi-intellectuals, some students expelled from the universities in Russia for revolutionary activity, with here and there a thief escaping from home to elude the police.

And when these people formed a *landsmanschaft*, it was named, characteristically enough, Driven Leaves.

Yes, that was a pioneer generation; and in the tortuous process of finding points of support for themselves in a new country, these people became hard, rugged, and sharp-witted; they needed strong arms and sharp nails for climbing the jagged rock of American reality.

Each of them strove to accumulate through daily and nightly toil sufficient money to go into business for himself. "In America," they claimed, "the dollar is God." (*Af Vaite Vegen*) This attitude precluded a romantic feeling or *landsmann* sentimentality. And when fellow-townsmen met by accident—not through the medium of a *landsmanschaft*, but through associations of a purely professional, economic character, like labor unions—they showed very little warmth in their relations with one another. Of mutual aid there was as yet no question.

## II

In Kobrin's *The Immigrants* (a novel of the life of Russian Jews in America in the period around 1910), for example, there is virtually no *landsmann* feeling to be observed among the various immigrant types, not to speak of any *landsmanschaft* communal life. In this novel, Jews from one town in the "old country" meet frequently. But is there any warmth, any sentiment in the relation of Boris Etinberg to Abrasha Schmitschke? The latter arouses only hatred and contempt. He is known by the assumed name of Abie

Mekneck and is the owner of a factory in which Boris Etinberg's "intelligent" daughter, Liuba, is compelled to labor.

Boris Etinberg, an erstwhile merchant from Kiev, cannot reconcile himself to the idea that Abrasha *Podlietz* (the knave), who was once subservient to him in Kiev when he served him as an errand boy, is now a "boss" and superior to him in social status. He still remembers him, hat in hand, standing in his Kiev office, his red, wildly dishevelled hair falling over his eyes in peasant fashion, his back bent before him, Boris Etinberg, who was his master. The lad was awaiting orders, his sly, thievish eyes alert to every gesture of the proprietor.

But ten years later, in America—

How can that be? Abrasha is a manufacturer, and he, Boris, what is he? . . . And his daughter, the young lady, she works in a factory, and for whom? For his former errand boy . . . Abrasha the Knave? No, it must be a dream . . . It cannot be true. My clerk, Volodia, is now Dr. Epstein, my errand boy, Abrasha, a manufacturer . . . It seems that Providence brought us to America in order that our former servants may laugh and mock us, humiliate and torture us . . .

No, this novel is utterly devoid of the sentimental feeling of *landsmann* relationships. Its principal theme is: "The wheel turns." Perhaps this is to be traced to the fact that its characters are not plain, ordinary people but "intellectuals," Russian-speaking, rich merchants, who look at everything askance: "The meat (here in America) is vile, bread—in-edible, the living quarters like stables . . ." In Kobrin's book we meet not the immigrant-mass, but the immigrant-dust; in Asch and Opatashu, however, we come upon the real representatives of the immigrants, cemented by a common pain and nostalgia for the old home. But in Kobrin's *The Immigrants* there is no direct representation of a factory or a *landsmanschaft*; when its characters seek entertainment they visit a cafe.

At that time there already existed so-



cieties and mutual aid leagues of fellow-townsmen, or else of a circle of friends. For example, we find in Libin's story, *Alternatives*, the hero, a consumptive furrier, is helped to leave his job and enter a sanatorium in Colorado—this assistance he receives from his "society" . . . But it is symptomatic that there are no other references to "societies" or *landsmanschaften* in Libin's work, which is so replete with all the agonies of the Jewish immigrant to America.

In this article, however, we are exclusively interested in the *landsmanschaft* theme, in the *landsmanschaft* as an organization which is of service to its members in America or to their "old home" in Europe; associations in which the fellow-townsmen lean upon each other for support during their "green years" of loneliness in a strange land; associations in which they gather to plan assistance to the unfortunate who remained at home, victims of frequent pogroms, of permanent economic helplessness, disturbances, wars, world-upheavals . . . Such themes and motifs began appearing in the Yiddish literature around 1910.

### III

Sholem Asch, the creator and lyrical depicter of the "hometown" on the banks of the Polish *Vaikel* was also the first to perceive the Jewish-American town on the banks of the Hudson.

This town or neighborhood was, naturally, transformed by its voyage from the home-grounds, by being uprooted and replanted on new soil. Nevertheless, it was an organism all to itself, a particular kind of community, a unity of fellow-townsmen.

To America, this moving, though often excessively sentimental epic of the wanderings, inner and outer, of an idealized small-townish youngster, Yosel, who accompanied his family to America—was written in 1910, when Jewish immigration was still at its height.

At that time, Meyer, Yosel's father, knew that as soon as he arrived in America he must get in contact with his fellow-townsmen—"the *landslait* on Third Street." He had their address with him. They met him at the boat, they provided him with a "place"—a shop closed on the Sabbath; every day a *landsmann* took him to and from the subway station, in which he started or ended his trip to the shop.

Meyer was not a man with a strongly-developed social sense. He did not belong to any league, society, civil or religious congregation; "he did not mingle with his fellows, had nothing to do with anyone." But two pages further we read how on Sabbath eve the *landslait* of Third Street took him along to the Congregation *Anshei Lenshne* (the men of *Lenshne*), the "society" of that town. Such congregations were often the nuclei out of which the *landsmanschaften* grew and formed.

The men of *Lenshne* were as yet without a hall of their own. But the tenement of the widow "on Third Street" was the common address of all the people from *Lenshne* arriving in New York. It was to this widow, known as "the aunt," that the immigrant telegraphed from aboard ship, and a *landsmann* came to take him off the boat and see him through the difficulties of landing. The "greenhorn" stays with the widow for a few days until he gets a job and is fitted out with the new-fangled American clothes. It is there, in the widow's tenement, that the *landslait* meet every Saturday night to talk and dream about the old days at home. When a newcomer arrives from *Lenshne*, he brings greetings, messages, and the latest news from the hometown: "Each one asked not only about his own kin, but also about acquaintances; there were also some who were curious about the fate of certain alleys, houses, cows, and dogs of *Lenshne* . . ."

And gradually a *landsmanschaft* be-

gins to form out of this common life. The older people had their Congregation Anshei Lenshne and the younger ones their Lenshner Young Men's Society, where behind the scenes all kinds of political deals were already in progress . . . When "slack-time" comes Meyer hears that "others belong to certain associations that give their members relief during slack times . . ." And "the relative from Third Street persuaded him to join one such association called 'Unity' in which all workers are united." But Meyer has little use for the association. "What kind of a workingman is he, anyway? He is a pious Jew, a scholar . . ." Only the meetings of the landslait on Third Street evoke his curiosity. And when he gets into trouble as his son Yosel is detained at Ellis Island, it is these same landslait who seek to help him.

In his humorous tale, *A Union for the Sabbath*, Asch describes in what way the landslait "helped out" their fellows from the hometown. When Moishe Aaron Leib, the teacher from Boroshovitch, wishes to come to America, the fellow-townsmen in America collected enough money to buy his passage.—"The first Sabbath that he spent in the New World his landslait skipped work, for his sake. Instead they accompanied him to the congregation of Boroshovitch so that he might meet acquaintances and find himself a "place" where it was not required that he work on the Sabbath."

#### IV

*To America*, however, is only a prologue to other works of Asch where the same themes are developed and elaborated on a wider canvas, or else viewed by him from a different angle of vision. Among such works the most important are, *Leibel at Home*, *Leibel in America*, *Uncle Moses*, and *The Landsmann*.

*Leibel at Home*, *Leibel in America* is a later work of Asch's which merely repeats the leitmotif of *To America*; with this difference, that in this work

it is an adult and not a child who refuses to accept America and adapt himself to it. Here we read a great deal more about landsmann life and landsmann relationships.

On Saturday Henich took his brother to the services at the Congregation Anshe Krushevitz, which held its Sabbath meetings at the wedding hall 'Paris,' which was also the meeting hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Down-Town Base Ball Club, and in which three times a week a Parisian dancemaster gave lessons. All the 'societies' had decorated the walls with their banners and statuary, with pictures of their erstwhile and incumbent presidents and vice-presidents, photographed in a variety of poses, not excluding the dancemaster in the company of his models and the souvenirs which he received as dance prizes. One joined the Congregation by walking through the salon of the dance hall 'Paris.'

In *Leibel at Home*, *Leibel in America* we are given a picture of an average meeting place of a landsmanschaft, a picture which to some extent holds even today . . . In this book, also, we are told that the "men of K." hold meetings on Saturday, and we gather from the plot that landsmann sentiments do not seem to interfere with the fact that one section of the landslait is exploiting the other sections.

Moishe Furman, a fellow who would not have dared to greet Leibel at home (in the hometown), who could never have dared to slap him on the back, use 'thou' in speaking to him, or 'What the hell, what's the difference' . . . But Henich consoled him, whispering in his ear:—'Be quiet, Leibel, this is America. Moishe might get you a job.'

And concerning another landsmann, Motel, we read the following dialogue between Leibel, the new immigrant, and his brother Henich:

Leibel: Oh, woe is me, isn't he Motel Orloff, he used to steal laundry from my garret . . .

Henich: Keep still . . . Motel is my boss, I sew shirts in his shop and Moishe Furman is one of his foremen. At home Moishe drove horses, here he drives men . . . And if Moishe wants to, you too will be harnessed; you will thank the Lord if he puts you in harness . . .

One wave of immigration followed another; the landslait helped one another to reach America . . . Each time a new "householder" from Krushevitz appeared on the scene, a man who at home was a business man, wealthy, dignified, and looked up to by his fellows. One by one they arrived and were compelled to sew shirts in Motel's shop. The entire Eastern wall (a special place of honor) of the synagogue in Krushevitz is to be found in this shop. The hand that whipped up horses at home is now driving the householders of Krushevitz at their labors. If the dead could remember life they could not feel as great a craving to return to their former existence as these householders long for the life they had abandoned . . . Each forsaken spot and stone in the hometown is recalled with loving care; each event of bygone days is caressingly remembered . . . But when the landslait become too exuberant in recalling the old days, Moishele Furman, the foreman, appears at their elbows, claps his hands together and rudely remarks:

"Krushevitz, shut up! This is no Krushevitz for you . . . If you work, all right; if not, get out of here . . ."

## V

In his novel, *Uncle Moses*, Asch again re-creates the intimate relations of the fellow-townsmen, including their struggles among themselves. But here we have a complete community, a whole Polish town, which had gradually removed itself to America and which endeavored to maintain its identity as one large family in the new environment.

At first Uncle Moses brought over his own kin: his brothers, later the children of his brothers, the uncles, the sons-in-law and the sons of the uncles. Thenceforward acquaintances and, in general, fellow-townsmen began turning to him to provide them with passage money. But it was not philanthropic or altruistic

feelings which moved Uncle Moses. The truth was that he exploited the landsman sentiments for his own purposes: he built a large shop in New York, where everybody was welcome to lend a hand in the manufacture of pants.

Uncle Moses was the man who levelled out Kuzmin. No more proud householders on one side, and poor artisans on the other. No more scholars on one side, and ignoramuses on the other; no more cobblers, amateur healers, and Jews who tickle women under the arms when they fit them out with clothes—now all serve one idol, all are engaged in one activity—pants . . .

And Uncle Moses towers over them with a large scissors, mocking:

See, see, how Kuzmin crawls . . . Hey, thou greenhorn. Do you think this is Kuzmin? In Kuzmin one could crawl along and dawdle, but this is America—here speed is essential. Hurry up, you green cucumber!

Rising on the shoulders of his fellow-townsmen, elevated by their toil and sweat, Uncle Moses demands that they honor and esteem the manufacturer from the Bowery: he sees to it that he is elected president of the "society" Anshe Kuzmin; he is the landlord of the houses in which they live; a few beds in the hospital, Bikur Cholim, in which Kuzmin people lie when they are ill, carry his name; the name Moses Melnik shines with golden letters on the gate to Shaar Chaim, the entrance to the cemetery in which the Kuzmin townsmen are buried when they die . . .

But Kuzmin refuses to perish! In Uncle Moses' loft (the factory) old Kuzmin is revived with all its peculiarities. Each stone and house in the hometown is recalled lovingly by the faithful exiles, who sit with pants in their hands. Now and then one hears a sigh, a groan, and a tear falling . . .

This nostalgia, this sentimentality for home and pristine derivation provided the first incentive to the creation of landsmanschaften.

On Saturday evenings the older landslait would foregather to spend their time reminiscing about Kuzmin . . . They longed for the Kuzmin sky, the Kuzmin moon, gardens and fields; as soon as they came together, Kuzmin was the subject of discussion. They had no other life save that which they had left behind in Kuzmin.

Some of the aging people could no longer endure this longing and went back to die in Kuzmin. Others bought cemetery grounds for themselves here, in America, so that when they died they might be with their own . . . This concern for a plot of cemetery ground became one of the outstanding motives in the organization of the landsmanschaft.

Later the economic motive was added, the organization of mutual aid. In Uncle Moses, who maintained patriarchal relations with his fellow-townsmen, this motive expresses itself in an inverted fashion. Uncle Moses exploited the landsmann sentiment in order to prevent his workers from organizing into a union to protect themselves from his rapacity . . . To fight?—against one's own? Didn't he bring them to America, furnish them with a living in his own shop? And besides—

Uncle Moses had bought for the 'society' (Anshe Kuzmin) a new lot for a cemetery. He sold half of it to another 'society'; this transaction netted him so much profit that the Kuzmin people got their cemetery virtually for nothing. Now he uses his business sagacity to get a synagogue built for the 'society.' Through business trickery he got a lot for such a synagogue almost free, and now he is concerned with exchanging the lot for a house in another neighborhood . . . Since Uncle Moses became interested in the 'society,' it grew apace, became rich and already swallowed a number of smaller 'societies.'

His activities in behalf of these communal needs soon made Uncle Moses famous outside the Kuzmin circle . . . Other institutions try to interest him in greater enterprises of a communal character. He becomes vice-chairman of an Old Men's Home, the treasurer of a Hebrew School, and the director of a small hospital . . . His fame as a philanthropist grows in the city.

I have quoted at length in order to show how "a public-spirited" citizen grows

out of the landsmanschaft circles. Thus, his communal activities were of little help to Uncle Moses once he faced the organization of a union, which was started in his shop by a young landsmann who had grown up in America. However, in this article we are interested in the landsmann as a centripetal, rather than centrifugal power, as a unifying factor, rather than as a differentiating one.

## VI

Similar motifs are to be found in Asch's play, *The Landsmann*, (1910-11). Jack is in many respects the prototype of Uncle Moses. The relations between him and the fellow-townsmen are equally patriarchal. But in this work the principal conflict is not about love or economics, but about lineage, family pride, and social derivation.

It concerns itself with the inner conflict in Jack between his inborn simplicity and genuineness—and his ambition to join, through marriage, the more aristocratic circle of the German Jews, who could provide him with a higher social status.

But the simple townsmen are victorious, nevertheless, over the "aristocratic" German-Jewish social snobs, who wish to "civilize" Jack on account of his wealth . . . Jack finds once again his peace in the company of his fellow-townsmen.

Leo Rozenkrantz, the hero of Abraham Raisin's story, *Three Generations* (*Forward*, Dec. 4, 1937) is "always overjoyed to meet a landsmann in New York." And Raisin tells us that

the closeness of the landsmann did not inhere in his thoughts, but in the street that he lived on when he was still in the hometown, that is, it was conditioned by the nearness of that street to Rozenkrantz's own . . . Even if this landsmann is older and more orthodox, expressing thoughts that have no relation to his own—as soon as he hears his voice, the voice of a neighbor in the old hometown, Rozenkrantz forgets his party, his institutions—it's the street, the old street, with the homelike people, the well-known speech . . .



Here it is Raisin speaking—Raisin the poet, who never sharpens small and inconsequential differences but constantly blunts the edges and obliterates the content of larger conflicts. It is the poet, who always smooths out instead of rending apart. Therefore there is no division among the "youngmen" in the story and the "oldtimers" of the "society" or the "independents" — all three generations unite to celebrate *one* anniversary . . ."

## VII

The landslait on Gorek Street (in Opatashu's *The Dancer*) did not found a landsmanschaft, but they are a prominent instance of the landsmann nucleus out of which such organizations were usually formed.

The story tells how Leizer kept up an establishment on Gorek Street only for the purpose of providing his fellow-townsmen with a meeting place, only because he wanted to alleviate their isolation in the alien city. They were his boarders. "All our own people, landsleit. I couldn't stand it seeing how they were scattered all over . . . some of them here, their families there, so I gave each one a corner."

When newcomers arrived, this was their first stop. A family atmosphere reigned in the house. The "greenhorns" went to work for Abe, the landsmann who had succeeded in acquiring a chicken market for himself. Even Zorach, who did not "hail" from the same town, was taken into this family: "also a landsmann, if not from the same town, then from the same province." In Opatashu, who is a more concise and colder writer than Asch, home sentiments also serve as a cementing factor.

"Here in the market they met friends, felt somewhat consoled, and did not cease speaking of 'those good times' at home, where the soul had stayed behind . . ."

This nostalgia for home, this emotion of loneliness served as the unifying factor.

Even Gentiles who came from the same province or town as the Jews often became friendly with their landsleit.

This is to be observed in David Ignatov's *On Distant Roads*, where not only Jews belonged to the Driven Leaves "society but Russians as well—all people with "Russian souls." One finds this in Asch's boat scenes (*To America*, pp. 150-156), in Opatashu's *The Dancer* (pp. 10-77). But this sentiment of closeness between Jew and non-Jew on the landsmann basis emerges most clearly in Y. D. Berkovitch's one-act play, (*Landsleit Zunkunft*, 1921).

When Antasha (a non-Jew) makes his long voyage to distant lands, he comes to New York and stops over with his former neighbor in his hometown Kozlov, the Jew Naphtoli Tcherniak, who is now a peddler. And Naphtoli receives him in his home with the most hospitable feelings—as if he were of his own family.

Naphtoli: "Well, what is there to say? We'll surely help you as much as we can . . . I do not forget former neighbors! It is no trifle! For thirty-five years I lived with your father door to door, born in the same village! Tomorrow I will go out myself to look for a job for you!"

And this—when he himself stands all day in front of his pushcart, peddling apples and bananas. Nevertheless—"I will not allow this simple soul, and green at that, to go to pot in a strange land!" It is precisely his educated, Americanized children who no longer have the slightest remembrance of the landsmann emotion, who make fun of the uncouth "greenhorn" until their father is hurt and is forced to call them, his own children—"anti-Semites."

## VIII

Until the World War the landsmanschaften were purely American, so to speak, in their activities—devoting themselves to mutual aid and moral assistance to their members *here*. After the war their activities broadened out to include

the fellow-townsmen in Europe—war-suffering, pogrom-wrecked, and economically ruined. This relief activity became, in fact, for a time virtually the chief concern of many a landsmanschaft. It is only natural that this stage in the history of the landsmanschaft should have found its reflection in Yiddish literature. The number of landsmanschaften increased in the post-war period. People who belonged to various fraternal organizations, to various independent leagues and associations, began organizing in landsmanschaften for the express purpose of aiding their calamity-stricken townsmen on the other side of the ocean.

This relief theme, the contrast between the riches of the relief-givers in America, and the relief-takers on the *other side*—is a part of the contents of the work *Lands and Lives*.<sup>\*</sup> It was at that time that the landsmanschaft began evolving that new post-war type, the delegate, the special emissary.

The delegate Bunem takes with him back to the hometown a whole transport

<sup>\*</sup> *Lands and Lives*, 2 vols., New York. Landsmanschaften Publishing House.

of medicaments, canned foods, old clothes, etc. . . . And on the basis of the disagreement between the American delegate and the local Soviet government with regard to the composition of the town Relief Committee, which the American landsmanschaft had selected, there ensues a certain friction, of no great importance; but the essential is given in the following:

From all the far-flung towns and villages emissaries were sent to confer with the Delegate. They came with sacks on their shoulders, with bags and baskets in their trembling hands, with valises, with peasant wagons, to carry away the gifts they thought had been sent to them, ready to take away their share of American riches . . .

For weeks these people wallowed in the town, besieging every office, every institution, pulling wires, utilizing every contact, sleeping on the pavements, and crowding under the alabaster statuary and the filthy backdoors that led to the First Government Hotel where the American delegate was staying.

Yes, a quotation which should serve as an indication of the wealth of material about Jewish life which the landsmanschaft theme contains and which Yiddish literature will yet explore in a broader fashion.

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All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression. Let us, then, fellow citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things. And let us reflect that having banished from our land that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody persecutions. During the throes and convulsions of the ancient world, during the agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long-lost liberty, it was not wonderful that the agitations of the billows should reach even this distant and peaceful shore; that this should be more felt and feared by some and less by others; that this should divide opinions as to measures of safety. But every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle.

THOMAS JEFFERSON: INAUGURAL ADDRESS (1801)



*Before the Wedding*

ARTIST UNKNOWN

# NEW YORK NOTES

By VERO

OUR DISTINGUISHED Christian friend, Mr. James G. McDonald, one of the American members of the Anglo-American Commission on Palestine and former League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spoke here before the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America on the subject of Judaism and Jewish leadership. Were it not for lack of space, I should like to reprint here the whole speech. He lashed those wealthy Jews who claim to be Jewish leaders, while they are living comfortably "in a world of illusion which they had created for themselves." He attacked the *schmerrertum* in our midst, the queer and undignified ways of raising money for victims of oppression, the arrogance of "Western" Jews who look down upon "Eastern" Jews. Here are a few highlights from his frank address:

I got the general impression that the less people know of Judaism, the more confident they are of their interpretation of it. To stand up and to argue seriously that Judaism is merely a religion, is to ignore the history of Judaism and to misunderstand and constrict its meaning out of all proportion to realities . . . It seems to me that most Jews have no conception of the breadth and scope, of the variety and the depth and the meaning of Judaism through the ages. They would take this fine, rich tapestry and reduce it to some sort of drab, plain, mechanical drawing which fades into their particular conception or particular prejudice, or any other need, caused by fear or by something else . . . Jewish leaders of this sort are Jewishly illiterate, because most of them no longer are interested. Some are actively engaged in trying to forget what little they had learned. They no longer read—they just aren't interested.

Mr. McDonald concluded his remarkably candid speech with the following sentence: "So my plea would be that what American Jewry needs more than all of its defense activities, more than its Christian-Jewish relations, more than powerful organization, is a rebirth and rededication to Judaism."

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FORTUNATELY, New York's two and a half million Jews—a larger number of Jews than that of the Jewish survivors in liberated Europe—do not completely ignore the fact that it is the task of American Jewry to take care of our Hebraic heritage, as nearly all rabbinical seminaries, Jewish libraries, art galleries and museums on the European continent have been destroyed. For instance, we have now here in America the first Jewish University—New York's Yeshiva College has been expanded into Yeshiva University, with the right to confer fifteen different degrees! In a few months, the largest Jewish museum in the world will be opened here to the public, since Mrs. Felix Warburg donated her fine six-story building to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, to house the Seminary's art collection. The new building, which triples the present capacity of the Seminary's Jewish Museum, will contain permanent and temporary collections of Jewish art, music, literature, as well as objects depicting the ritual life and history of the Jews. Dr. Finkelstein, president of the Seminary explained, "The



museum ought to become a center for creative artists, who wish to express the traditions and aspirations of the Jewish people in the varied media of music, painting, sculpture, and letters."

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**T**O THE Yiddish Scientific Institute go our good wishes on the occasion of the Yivo's 20th anniversary. The Yivo was founded in Vilna to promote scientific work in Yiddish. The second World War forced the Institute to abandon its great library and archives in Vilna and to move to America. In New York, the Yivo has again established a large library, it has published numerous journals, books, and monographs of high value, and recently it has shipped thousands of volumes to Europe, for use in Displaced Persons' Camps. This is Yivo's creed:

Without research and study of our life of yesterday and today, the Jewish community cannot adequately plan for tomorrow. The Yivo is engaged in social research not only to accumulate knowledge for future scholars, but also to aid practically in making Jewish life richer and more significant for the individual Jew and to help in outlining schemes of development for the Jewish group.

During the proceedings of its 20th Anniversary Conference, the Yivo held an exhibition of works of Enrico Glicenstein, the outstanding artist who died three years ago. The exhibition included twenty of Glicenstein's etchings on biblical and general subjects and a few sculptures carved in wood.

Simultaneously, the Histadruth Ivrit of America celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. It was organized for the promotion of Hebrew culture in this country, and it now publishes books by American Hebrew writers, the weekly *Hadoar*, and a year book. In addition, it furthers educational activities and youth clubs, and it maintains a summer camp, a dramatic studio, a dance group, and a choral society.

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**T**HE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS seems to be aware of the shortcomings of American Jewish leadership, as criticized in Mr. McDonald's aforementioned speech. To improve that situation, the American Jewish Congress established five annual fellowships for research in contemporary social, political, and economic problems, as they affect Jews. Awarded by the Congress "to afford those planning to dedicate themselves to communal affairs an opportunity for intensive study of the Jewish community," the scholarships are valued at \$2,500 each and will go to members of the graduating classes of the leading theological seminaries and rabbinical training institutions in the country, including the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago.

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**I**T HAPPENED to participate in one of the social affairs to celebrate the centenary of New York's West End Synagogue (Congregation Shaarey Tefila). That congregation has an interesting history. It was founded in 1845 when a small group of Jews residing in New York City formed an "Association" for worship and religious fellowship, which counted among its members Jewish families which had been in America since Revolutionary times. The first rabbi of the Congregation was The Reverend Samel M. Isaacs, grandfather of Stanley Isaacs, former borough president of Manhattan. Rabbi Isaacs was the only minister to participate in the memorial services for Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

In its long history, West End Synagogue has been affiliated in turn with each of the three great divisions of Judaism. For the last fifty years it has been a Reform congregation. Chairman of the Centennial Committee of the Synagogue was Hon. Stanley M. Isaacs who made public greetings to the congregation on its 100th anniversary by the Governor of New York State and the Mayor of New York City.

IN ADDITION to cultural and religious activities, the Jews of Gotham do not neglect the duties of charity, either. New York's Jewry sent its delegates to the Eastern Regional Conference of the United Jewish Appeal, who met at the Waldorf Astoria with delegates from forty other Eastern cities. They heard speakers detail the plight of the Jewish survivors in Europe and listened to a plea for \$100,000,000, a fund vital to "assure their survival and prevent their further destruction."

Said Dr. Leo Baeck, former chief rabbi of Berlin: "This is the challenge destiny has put before the Jews of America. Will American Jewry, acting in concert and motivated by one central force, give the 'displaced' Jews of Europe a 'place'? Does American Jewry possess the vision and moral fervor necessary to breathe life into Jewry? I do not ask these questions. History asks them."

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UNFORTUNATELY, there are bad tidings from New York, too. The Mayor's Committee on Unity, composed of fifteen prominent New York citizens, "revealed" what can hardly be considered a secret, namely, that Jews, Catholics, and Negroes are discriminated against by colleges and universities in this city. In a detailed report the Committee disclosed that although all the New York City schools publicly deny discrimination against any racial or religious group, deans and prominent faculty members of many of these schools have admitted, privately and off the record, that discriminatory quotas do exist.

Among the measures considered to end this shame were:

a) the establishment of a university supported by the city or by the state which would be open to everybody, regardless of race or creed,

b) The withdrawal of tax exemption

on their real estate from all discriminating schools, excepting those that are legally sectarian,

c) the broadening of the Ives-Quinn anti-discrimination law to include scholastic bias.

It remains to be seen which of these measures will be taken. In any event, Dr. Stephen S. Wise was definitely right when he wrote to Mayor O'Dwyer that "the time has come to say openly and without ambiguity that the institutions guilty of anti-educational bias have, in the last decades, obtained hundreds of millions of public moneys under false pretenses." Dr. Wise went on to say:

The community subsidizes educational institutions in the conviction that they perform a social service. In fact, however, schools which accept the people's subsidy but arbitrarily reject a large section of the very people who pay that subsidy, render a disservice to society. They undermine, indeed, the very foundation upon which the institutions of a free people rest.

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AT TIMES it seems necessary to censure some of our Jewish fellowmen on account of their silly and often obnoxious desire for publicity. There exists here a Revisionistic group, Brith Trumpeldor. In its training school, about one hundred young Jewish men and women are being given military drill, and instruction in such hand-to-hand combat as jiu-jitsu. A former United States Army major, a non-Jew, is one of the instructors. So far, so good. But one day the director in charge of the training gave a sensational interview to a reporter of the *New York Times*, in which he boasted that the young folks, after the completion of their training, intend to join up with "the militant movement in Palestine for a Jewish state." He declared that they would get to Palestine through the so-called "illegal route." Furthermore the director declared that "a virtual state of hostilities exists between the British and Jewish nations"

and that "young Jews throughout the world stand ready to join the struggle." The story was illustrated with two large pictures of boys and girls drilling in jiu-jitsu.

I am far from believing that the Jews must not defend themselves, if attacked, and I do not condemn the hotspurs in Palestine who, regrettably, believe they can accelerate the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth through acts of terrorism. But why use such strong language, as was used by the speaker of Brith Trumpeldor? Why exaggerate the facts, and why give the hasty, often poorly informed millions of readers of the *New York Times* the impression that whole armies of young Jews are in training, ready to be shipped to Palestine to make war on the British? *Cui bono*? I cannot help asking, surprised and disturbed.

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**I** HOPE CHICAGO will soon see the current Broadway hit, *Home of the Brave*, hailed by critics as "the best drama yet on World War II" and "the year's most obvious candidate for the Pulitzer Prize." Its author is a New York Jewish war veteran, 27-year-old Arthur Laurents. It is a drama about the war and about anti-Semitism in the army. The dramatist psychoanalyses the hunted one, not the hunter. Says the army doctor to the patient who has become paralyzed in both legs after an anti-Semitic incident:

"You've got to realize something. You're the same as anybody else. You're no different, son, no different at all."

Coney: "I'm a Jew."

Doctor: "This sensitivity, Pete. This has been like a disease in you . . . But you can dig it out yourself, you can help

dig it out of them and you've got to, Pete, you've got to."

Perhaps the author over-simplifies the issue. It is not enough to cure the victim, to rid him of his feeling of insecurity—the persecutors would have to be treated as well. Despite some ideological faults, *Home of the Brave* is a first class drama. All the hideousness of the war is in the play, and all the desire of an idealist to liberate this country from the disease of racial and religious bias.

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**P**IERRE VAN PAASSEN's decision to become a minister of the First Unitarian Church in Orange, New Jersey (a few miles west of New York City) did not come as a surprise to those who knew that the famous writer and lecturer had been trained for the ministry many years ago. In accepting the invitation to join the Unitarian ministry, Mr. Van Paassen said that it was an "act of Christian affirmation, an act of faith to humanize the social order before the forces of reaction gain the upper hand and turn the 'land of pilgrim's pride' into a moral fascist leper colony." After his ordination the Reverend Van Paassen made a speech in which he strongly lashed those people in this country who are "working underground for a short war with Russia." Such a war, he said, would lead to the "murder of mankind." He asserted that there was "more religion in the Russian program to improve the welfare of the Russian people than in many of our most solemn temples."

Our best wishes go to the Reverend Van Paassen who has always proved himself a genuine Christian and a sincere friend of the Jewish people.

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*Human freedom consists in perfect adjustments of human interests and human activities and human energies.*

WOODROW WILSON

# WASHINGTON NOTES

By MURRAY FRANK

AFTER SEVEN long gruelling days, the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee on Palestine concluded its hearings in Washington last January and departed for Europe where the investigation of this vexatious problem was resumed in London and in the internment camps in Germany, which are still "home" to some 100,000 displaced Jews. Early in March the Inquiry Committee will begin the last phase of its investigation in Palestine itself, and sometime in April it will submit a detailed report of its findings and recommendations to the two governments. I sat through the hearings in Washington from beginning to end, I took careful note of the cross-examination of witnesses by Committee members, I discussed various fine points and incidents during the hearings with many of the witnesses, with members of the press and with ordinary visitors—and still feel that any attempt to reach definite conclusions and make definitive evaluations is purely conjectural and highly risky.

Notwithstanding the risk involved, I shall venture to record some impressions which, to me, were conclusive evidence and highly effective:

1. *The great tragedy that the Jews have suffered in Europe in recent years, i.e., the extermination of six million Jewish souls and the almost complete annihilation of great Jewish communities which have existed in some parts of Europe for a thousand years, has perhaps never before been brought out so lucidly and authoritatively as it was done at the hearings in Washington, particularly by Mr. Earl*

Harrison and Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz of the Joint Distribution Committee. The saddest and most impressive moment at the hearings was when Dr. Schwartz told the Committee that in all of Europe, outside of Russia, there are today no more than 150,000 Jewish children under the age of 14, or about 10% of the number of such children before the war—and most of these are either full or half orphans! It was a most touching scene when it so shockingly dawned on those of us of the press and the public that here was an ancient and eternal people almost bereft of its young generation!

2. *The case for a Jewish Palestine was presented by the Jewish leaders in a very impressive and convincing manner. They clearly established the relationship between the Jewish tragedy in Europe and Jewish homelessness, and, as a natural sequence and logical deduction, pointed to the one solution—a Jewish state in Palestine. The thought that Jewish homelessness is a major factor of Jewish suffering and constant persecutions has left a deep and profound impression on Committee members.*

3. *The testimony and factual material presented by experts concerning the economic and industrial development of Palestine once and for all established the country's capacity to absorb a large Jewish immigration and its possibilities for great industrial and agricultural expansion needed to support a large population. Economist Robert Nathan, who made an objective on-the-spot survey of the economic potentialities of Palestine last year,*



and Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk and his group of engineers who propose a huge water development project to be known as Jordan Valley Authority, were among the most effective witnesses because they pointed the direction of a solution—at least from the economic viewpoint.

Despite these notable accomplishments, despite the strong pleas in behalf of the Jewish case on the basis of historical, legal, economic, and humanitarian grounds, one must not overlook the most important factor of all—the political! We would be deluding ourselves no end if we were to believe that the problem of Palestine will be approached other than from the point of view of political expediency. What may have been so painstakingly accomplished in Washington, may perhaps very easily have been undone later in London.



THERE WERE MANY interesting and at times dramatic incidents at the Palestine hearings described above, but the one that by far impressed me most concerns Lord Morrison, one of the British members of the Inquiry Committee. The incident passed practically unnoticed in the press, but is worth recording. It occurred on the second day. I was sitting in the press section, perhaps no more than two feet away from Lord Morrison. Up until that time Lord Morrison had asked no questions of the witnesses and made no comments on their testimony as did other members, and I had about reached certain conclusions regarding Lord Morrison. But then something happened.

The witness on the stand was Dr. Emanuel Neumann, vice president of the Zionist Organization of America. During the course of his testimony Dr. Neumann made the charge which is heard so often that had not England shut the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration from Europe back in 1939, hundreds of thousands of the Jews who later perished would have gone to Palestine and would now

be among the living. During the questioning period, Lord Morrison suddenly turned to Dr. Neumann and asked his first and one of his very infrequent questions:

"Sir, I hope you will forgive my hypersensitivity on this score, but many of us are sensitive about it. I refer to the charges made here that British policy was partially to blame for failure to save the 6,200,000 Jews who perished in Europe. I would like you to modify the charge, bearing in mind that for part of the time under consideration Britain stood alone against the enemy; Russia had not yet entered the war, and the Near East was, as you have pointed out, the quagmire of treachery."

The remark of Lord Morrison took me by surprise. Here, I felt, we have at last a truer expression of British conscience in the matter of Palestine and its relation to Jewish suffering in Europe than in the approach of a Bevin, which is characterized by its cynicism and insensitiveness. Lord Morrison's remark, made in the nature of a plea to Dr. Neumann to modify a very serious charge which is bound to be recorded in history for all posterity to read, merely underscores the fact that this charge has become a weighty and pressing matter on the minds of serious-thinking Englishmen.



PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S order to facilitate the admission of European refugees into the United States, under established quota regulations, is a step in the right direction which this government should have taken long ago. But even at this late date, the admission of so limited a number as 39,000 refugees per year will make only a small dent in the mass of helpless and homeless humanity uprooted by the war in Europe. President Truman was evidently aware of this because he expressed the hope that the step taken by the U. S. would induce other countries to open their doors too.

While ordering the normal resumption of immigration of displaced persons, the President at the same time spoke out vigorously against any legislation which would either entirely eliminate or drastically reduce immigration, as advocated by reactionary elements in Congress. It is likely that the world may not regard the step taken to admit a restricted number of refugees as a sufficiently generous gesture on the part of this country. One must, however, realize that to press the matter further at this time would only incite the reactionary and isolationist groups in Congress to tighten up on existing immigration restrictions.

The movement of these homeless people to the U. S. is scheduled to begin in the early spring of 1946, by which time the return of America's armed forces from abroad will have been almost completed. Most of the immigrants presumably will be orphaned children living in the American occupation zones, who will be issued visas without discrimination as to their racial or religious antecedents. Displaced nationals from Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia will be considered for potential immigration to this country, and among them will undoubtedly be a substantial number of Jews.

In the same order, the President disclosed that steps have been taken to allow the nearly 1000 refugees, more than 900 of whom are Jews, who were brought here about a year and a half ago to the Oswego refugee camp, to remain in the U. S. in accordance with immigration laws. It would be "inhuman and wasteful" to return them to Europe now, President Truman stated in his order. Readers of *Washington Notes* will doubtless recall my discussion of this matter in the last issue (Winter 1945-46) of *THE FORUM* in which I predicted that the refugees would be allowed to remain here and even indicated the course of action to be taken in legalizing their entry.

SOME WEEKS AGO I attended a press conference given here at B'nai B'rith headquarters for Rabbi Leo Baeck, former Chief Rabbi of Berlin and president of the B'nai B'rith in Germany before the war. The venerable 72-year old German Jewish leader, who is a survivor of two years in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, stated in no uncertain terms that the history of the Jews in Germany is finished and that there is absolutely no foundation for the reestablishment of Jewish life there or elsewhere on the European continent, with the possible exception of Western Europe.

Dr. Baeck, who had been arrested five times by the Gestapo and suffered many hardships, including the loss of four sisters and three brothers at the hands of the Nazis, nevertheless spoke without bitterness, although the tone of his voice was grim and resolute when he told the newsmen gathered about him: "A deep gulf exists between the German people and the Jews, and it is questionable whether it can be bridged. When one goes through Germany, he sees where synagogues were burned, places where relatives were killed. Every street cries of terrible crimes. It would be impossible to stay in Germany . . . The Jews in the displaced persons camps in Germany have but one cry: Palestine and America!"

In a personal chat with Dr. Baeck, following the press conference, he confided to this writer his hope for an early visit to Palestine and his wish to spend the remainder of his life in the Holy Land. He asked me to relay the following message of encouragement to Palestinian Jewry at this trying time:

"Palestine is the hope for the persecuted Jews who, indeed, live by this hope. It serves as a strong faith for all, that it may be the very home for all Jews who will have their place on earth. Palestine is no longer a problem, but a fact. It is no longer a matter of dissent among Jews, but a matter of union and harmony.

All Jews in Palestine must know that the souls and the prayers of all Jews all over the world are with them."



RECENTLY I had the occasion to interview UNRRA Deputy Director General Michael A. Menshikov, who is also the official Soviet representative on the UNRRA Council. Mr. Menshikov had just returned from Poland, where he headed a ten-man delegation for the purpose of setting up a permanent UNRRA mission there. This is what I learned from him concerning the Jews in Poland:

Since UNRRA has to supply large parts of Europe, the amount of relief made available to Jews in Poland through UNRRA is far from sufficient. The Jews of Poland, many of whom have only recently come out of hiding or are just returning from Russia, are in a precarious position physically and economically and need all the help they can get from Jewish organizations in other countries. The present Polish Government welcomes such assistance, either through UNRRA or through direct contact with the Government. When UNRRA supplies reach the ports of Gdynia or Danzig, they are distributed by the Government to five or six major groups, among whom is included the Jewish Relief Committee headed by Dr. Emil Sommerstein. The Jewish Relief Committee submits its requirements in advance.

The most striking picture during his six-weeks stay in Poland, Mr. Menshikov related, was that in his travels throughout the country he met only two Jews with beards, which is an indication to what an extent orthodox Jewry in Poland has been annihilated. At the time he left Poland, Mr. Menshikov estimated that there were less than 100,000 Jews there, but many Jews were already being repatriated from Russia. He explained the current wave of anti-Semitism and pogroms in Poland as being organized by

Fascist elements who are trying to create confusion in the hope of reviving the pre-war regime. Mr. Menshikov also told of encountering many Poles in Warsaw who spoke, however, with great admiration of the Jewish resistance and of the fact that the Jews were the first to begin revolts against the Nazis and encouraged the Poles to do likewise.



RANTING JOHN RANKIN of Mississippi, notorious anti-Semite and arch-reactionary, recently chose Prof. Albert Einstein as target for one of his periodic hate-preachments on the floor of Congress. Rankin received a card from the American Committee for Spanish Freedom asking for support in its fight to obtain a break in relations with Franco-Spain. The card bore Einstein's signature. That was too much for Rankin. He proceeded at once to the legislative chamber, obtained the floor, and lashed out with a scurrilous attack in typical Rankin fashion on "this foreign-born agitator" Einstein who "would have us plunge into another war in order to further the spread of communism."

Logic? A man like Rankin does not resort to logic, the less the better. Besides, he would not recognize logic if he should see it. Here is some more from him on the subject of Einstein and see if you can make sense out of it:

"It is about time the American people got wise to Einstein. In my opinion he is violating the law and ought to be prosecuted . . . Here is a man using the mail to raise money to propagandize us into breaking relations with Spain . . . I call upon the Department of Justice to put a stop to this man Einstein . . ."



THE HOUSE COMMITTEE on Un-American Activities (the old Dies Committee), of which Rankin is without a doubt the most forceful member though not its chairman,

is now running roughshod over groups and individuals who dare to think, or influence others to think, of life and events in a manner which is contrary to the "logical" approach of a Rankin and others of that "school of thought." If you belong to one of certain minority groups or your opinion differs from that of Rankin's, you are immediately branded an alien, or a Communist, or both—and you should be investigated for un-American activities. The Committee, to be sure, is also supposed to track down Nazis and Fascists in this country, but to date has not found any! Several weeks ago, Rep. Adolph J. Sabath of Chicago told the House of Representatives that

there exists a definite, deliberate, and well-financed campaign backed by reactionary forces in this country to try to discredit as communistic every liberal group, and every movement working for improvement of the lot of the average citizen, and every legislative measure designed to accomplish that end . . . These miscreants, who dare not risk a public judgment founded upon a well-informed citizenry, employ the services of professional demagogues and rabble-rousers of the type of Gerald L. K. Smith, Joe Kamp, William Pelley, Joe McWilliams, and others like that sorry group of alleged seditionists . . . These Benedict Arnolds, quislings, bundists, silver shirkers, and such nefarious villains, in seeking to distract attention from their own seditious activities, invariably turn upon our patriotic, liberty- and freedom-loving citizens, especially those of foreign extraction . . . They hide in the shadows of Hitler's great lies. The last thing they want is a thorough investigation.

After such an outburst of oratory in which the finger was pointed directly at the culprits, one would think that the House Committee on Un-American Activities would immediately proceed to undertake investigations. Instead, the Committee has been investigating Hollywood, radio news analysts and commentators, refugee and anti-Fascist organizations, Justice Murphy's National Committee to Combat anti-Semitism, and similar groups which supposedly carry on "un-American activities." It is no wonder that members of Congress itself, as well as the public and

the press, are beginning to lose patience at such tactics which are deliberately one-sided and follow a definite pattern.

Besides Rep. Sabath, who has attacked the Committee on many occasions, others in Congress have lately come forth with scathing denunciations and demands for its dissolution. In fact a group of Congressmen have recently begun to circulate a petition asking the House Rules Committee to release a resolution which calls for abolition of the Un-American Activities Committee. The sharpest rebuke the Committee has suffered yet came in recent days when the influential *Washington Post*, in an editorial on "Controlling Thought," warned that the only danger of controlling the thoughts of American citizens comes from "those like the Un-American Activities Committee who would suppress the free expression of ideas." The editorial concludes forcefully:

We say again that this Un-American Activities Committee, acting as it does under the authority and sponsorship of the House of Representatives, casts an ugly stain upon the integrity and the good name of Congress. It undermines faith in the legislative process. It violates fundamental concepts of Americanism. We urge the members of Congress soberly to examine what this committee has done and resolutely to put an end to its travesty on the American idea.



THE NUMBER of Jewish members of Congress was diminished by two at the beginning of the present session, following the resignations of Samuel Dickstein (D. of N. Y.) and Samuel A. Weiss (D. of Pa.) both of whom were elected to judgeships in their respective home states. Dickstein, who was chairman of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, was a member of Congress for 23 years. Weiss served in Congress nine years. Six Jewish members of Congress now remain to complete the present session. They are: Adolph J. Sabath, Ill.; Sol Bloom, N. Y.; Emanuel



Celler, N. Y.; Herman P. Koppleman, Conn.; Benjamin J. Rabin, N. Y.; and Leo F. Rayfiel, N. Y. All of them are Democrats.

As is customary upon resigning, a Congressman makes a farewell speech. Usually, it is a review of his accomplishments and his activities while in office. Dickstein and Weiss followed the usual pattern, but toward the close of his speech Dickstein made the following noteworthy observation:

And so, as I am saying good-bye to the membership of the House, I am repeating to you the warning of 1934 (Congressman Dickstein warned Congress in a speech in 1934 that Hitler was aiming to destroy the United States by means of intolerance—M.F.): *Do not allow intolerance to gain control. America is a country of many nationalities, many racial stocks, many civilizations. It is the glory of America that no matter whence its citizens have come, no matter what their racial background, they must always stand together to work toward the well-being of the Nation, for only in unity lies our strength.*

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## REFUGEE

By ELEANOR ALLETTA CHAFFEE

Slowly he learned to smile with us: to hear  
The door unlatch without a sidelong stare,  
To see the dawn rise quiet, sweet and clear,  
Over a threshold welcoming and fair.  
As one who, stricken, loses for a season  
The strength to walk, but not the will to move,  
So he had lain inert, struck down by treason,  
Who had believed all things made safe by love.

Slowly he seemed as one of us, walled in  
By peace and safety, fugitive no more.  
Though sometimes, when alone, his lips grew thin:  
He was a stranger on a lonely shore,  
Seeking within the labyrinth of his mind  
Some hidden covert from the searching wind.

# BOOKS

*Letters From The Desert*, by Moshe Mosenson. New York. Sharon Books, 1945. (Translated from the Hebrew by Hilda Auerbach; edited with an introduction by Shlomo Grodzensky.) 222 pp.

*Soldiers From Judea*, by Major Lewis Rabinowitz. New York. American Zionist Emergency Council 1945. 84 pp. \$0.25.

These two books dovetail very neatly into each other and are indispensable to anyone who would like to get a clear picture of Palestinian Jewish military participation in this war. In Mosenson's letters we get an inner view of the Palestinian Jewish soldier, while in Major Rabinowitz's book we get a more objective, external view of the same soldier. The emphasis of the first is upon psychology, of the second upon military science—but both are distinguished by the evident love of their authors for the Jewish people. This love is all-pervasive, and sometimes the reader gets the feeling that the books might have been better if it had been present by implication rather than by outright statement—if it had been conveyed more subtly. It must be remembered, however, that neither author is a writer by profession. Rabinowitz served as the senior Jewish chaplain of the British Middle East Forces and the Eighth Army, and Mosenson was a farmer in Palestine who probably never aspired to see his name on the cover of a book before the present war.

There were 30,000 Jewish volunteers in Palestine. In proportion to the entire population, this represented the equivalent of 8,000,000 volunteers in the United States. If such enthusiasm for the war had been shown in this country, it is doubtful if conscription would have been necessary. These volunteers came from every section of the population, every political grouping—not to speak of numbers of refugees. It was a genuine national outpouring of strength. As Rabinowitz puts it somewhere, the lion of Re-

visionism lay down with the lamb of Histadruth.

Mosenson was no fire-eating youngster when he joined up for war. He was already married and the responsible head of a family, and that was precisely why he thought that he should be the first to go. There were those in the Jewish settlements who argued that family men should not be asked to volunteer, but Mosenson felt that the older men like himself were precisely the ones who were not likely to be uprooted from their people by the rigors of war. His wife, too, spoke up to ask that he be permitted to go. He had already learned the use of a gun during the Arab riots. Violence and the fear of violence was the atmosphere breathed daily by his community for many years. He made a good soldier, I should judge from his own account.

Some of Mosenson's moral attitudes toward drinking and gambling and whoring give point to the remark recorded in Rabinowitz's book of a Christian chaplain who said: "I don't understand these Jewish commando boys. They go out on the most desperate of suicidal jobs and when they return, instead of indulging in drink and wildness, they come into the canteen to drink tea, read, play chess or write letters." However, Mosenson himself admits that not all the Jewish lads were as much on their good behavior wherever they went as he was.

The most exciting military exploits are chronicled in Rabinowitz's book. Mosenson's outfit chafed a good deal of the time because of lack of employment, but this certainly could not have been the complaint of the Jewish commando groups who played a prominent role in the British campaign in Abyssinia. Many stories of heroism have come out of this war but none that I have read surpasses the simple chronicle of what these Jewish men did.

Mosenson's book may be interesting to the future historian because of the many

representative attitudes and unresolved conflicts which it contains. The most important of these is the question of the relationship between religion and nationalism. The writer is a professed socialist and manifestly not religious but his nationalism is fervent enough to border on the mystical, and it is this that makes him not only tolerant but sympathetic to the rituals of the Jews in foreign countries with whom he comes into contact.

Without being in the least in the class of apologetic literature, these two books are actually the most effective of all possible apologies for the Jewish people. There is a minimum of adjectives in them and a maximum of facts. Not by words but by deeds will the Jews assert their right to live among the nations of the world on equal terms. Mosenson and Rabinowitz have supplied us with a chronicle of some of those deeds.

MILTON HINDUS

*Reveille For Radicals*, by Saul D. Alinsky. University of Chicago Press. 228 pp. 1946. \$2.50.

Let the chance reader who picks up Mr. Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals* persevere beyond the first chapter, which will probably irritate him if he is a sensible man. In it Mr. Alinsky displays none of that charity and love for his fellow man which he declares to be the moving passion of radicals and which he professes himself. Mr. Alinsky it seems can tolerate all mankind except liberals. Liberals infuriate him. They "like people with their head" . . . they "lay claim to the precious quality of impartiality, of cold objectivity." The radical on the other hand "sees injustice and strikes at it with hot passion. He is a man of decision of action." Apparently his virtue lies in action for its own sake, with or without thought.

The rhetorical and impassioned first chapter does an injustice to the author who, in later chapters, shows himself to have much more tolerance and humanity than one expects, and who, indeed, displays those very qualities of objective thought which he so much detests in liberals. However Chapter II, though it softens the first unfortunate impression, is also in large part irrelevant. In it he condemns labor unions for their approval

of the capitalistic system. He lumps together in his indictment the corrupt building trades unions of Chicago with Sidney Hillman's Garment Workers' Union, surely a very undiscriminating association. Mr. Alinsky would be well advised in subsequent editions of what will probably prove to be a popular book to omit the first two chapters entirely.

The third chapter is the true introduction to the book. In it he depicts the monotony and despair incident to the lives of our urban masses sunk in such ignorance and apathy as to be seemingly beyond hope of social redemption. Then in subsequent chapters he depicts the metamorphosis of many slum communities when awakened to life by the People's Organizations. Of these Mr. Alinsky speaks from evident knowledge and his report is worth the attention of any reader.

People's Organizations do what uplift organizations attempt to do and fail. They are based on a different psychology. The uplift organization endeavors to extend a helping hand. Its attitude is too frequently superior and condescending. It therefore is resented and the good it does is superficial. People must be taught to help themselves, to lift themselves from their morass by their own efforts, by cooperative democratic action. The organizer simply helps them to get together. They find their own solutions and educate themselves in the process to the democratic and cooperative way of life.

The book is largely a fascinating collection of case histories. Many communities have been organized, have learned to better their condition, and have inculcated citizenship in so doing. As the author rightly contends, it is only as we, all of us, learn to cooperate in friendly groups by working tolerantly together that we can make democracy a success and save it from the perils of autocracy and class domination which now beset it. Democracy won the war by an eyelash but the reactionary forces within our country are cunning and strong. It will take a stronger and more vigilant democracy than we have yet realized to defeat them.

"The job ahead," says the author, "is the job of building broad, deep Peoples' Organizations which are all-inclusive of both the people and their many organ-

izations . . . It is the job of building a People's Organization so that people will have faith in themselves and in their fellow men . . . It is the greatest job man could have—the actual opportunity of creating and building a world of decency, dignity, peace, security, happiness; a world worthy of man and worthy of the name of civilization. This is the job ahead."

The book concludes with the "By-laws of the People's Organization," a brief and clear statement of its purpose and tested procedure.

CARL GRABO

*The Talmudic Anthology*, by Louis Newman. Berman House, New York, 570 pp. \$3.50.

The Talmud has been a sealed book to the Western World. Not being known, it was suspected, misunderstood, maligned, and burned officially by the Church and unofficially by mobs. Only in recent times, particularly as a result of the labors of Travers R. Herford and George Foot Moors, Christian scholars are beginning to shed their deeply rooted prejudices against the Talmud as the product of the Pharisees—the "vipers, serpents, hypocrites" of the new Testament. But no scholarly work no matter how well documented and how lucidly written can easily undo the mischief of centuries diligently cultivated by the enemies of Jewry and Judaism. To achieve a wider acceptance of the truth about the Talmud there is need for writings accessible to the average reader. Indeed even the Jew in our times is lost in the "Sea of the Talmud."

As every student of Jewish history knows, the Talmud is not a book in the conventional sense of the word. Rather is it a record of the laws, customs, beliefs, practices, and aspirations of the Jewish people in the course of some eight hundred years in Palestine and Babylon as recorded by some thousand scholars, lawyers, sages, and poets. It is the life experience of a people far removed in time and in distance from the Western World and, therefore, speaks a language (Hebrew and Aramaic) and uses an idiom totally unknown and at times incomprehensible to the vast majority of non-Jews and large numbers of Jews. Yet the whole structure of Judaism stands or falls with the Talmud. For,

granted that the roots of Judaism and Jewish civilization are to be found in the Bible, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, and the fruits of Judaism as known and practiced by Jewry in the course of more than two thousand years have been fashioned, cemented, and preserved by the teaching of the Talmud. Biblical teachings have served as the underlying, motivating, and inspiring force in the evolution of Judaism but it is the Talmud that designed the plans, and fashioned the tools that helped build the architecture of Jewish life and institutions in the course of generations in many lands and in different climes. Jewry, up to our own times, believes in the prophetic ideals of the Bible but expresses these beliefs through the rules and the practices of the Talmud. The home, the synagogue, the festivals, the institutions, to the extent that they have remained Jewish, are essentially Talmudic in form and in content rather than Biblical, for the Talmud, which is substantially the creation of a diaspora Jewry, has proved to be better attuned to needs of the Jew away from his Biblical home in Palestine. In the light of these historic realities one must greet with the traditional "Shehehyanu" every earnest and sincere effort to make Talmudic wisdom more easily available to the modern reader.

With the bulk of Jewry living today in English speaking countries such an effort to present some aspects of the Talmud through the medium of the English language like the *Talmudic Anthology* by Louis I. Newman is a blessing to our people. The great merit of this outstanding volume of five hundred and seventy pages is that it does not preach, explain, interpret, and apologize, but presents certain phases of the Talmud itself to the modern reader. To make it possible for the untrained to plunge into the world of the Talmud, the editor has done an admirable job in organizing and classifying his materials in a fairly exhaustive manner, for there is hardly a significant utterance of the Rabbis of the Talmud that is not reflected in this Anthology.

While the aim of the author has been chiefly "homiletical," and for this reason has not included selections from "Halahah," there is much in the volume that would serve the student of the history of human and Jewish culture. The well chosen topical arrangement, the simple



and lucid style should do much to encourage the beginner to seek more knowledge and deeper understanding of the Talmud either in its original or through the excellent translation edited by I. Epstein of the Concino Press.

Having invested so much labor in the compilation of this book, it is to be regretted that the author himself should not be too sure of his "source references," leaving them for further verification to "the technical student," (pp. XXXV). Such lack of complete verification of sources may not trouble the novice or the homelitician, but places a great burden upon the student who must doubt all the sources not knowing which has been verified and which not.

The Rabbis of the Talmud taught that he who "begins a Mitzvah should complete it." We sincerely trust that the author will complete his great labor by checking thoroughly his sources for the next edition.

"The beauty of Japheth in the Tents of Shem" had always been the ideal of our sages. In this Anthology as well as in many other recent publications, the Behrman House has brought to Jewish books the fine craftsmanship, good taste and beauty of the best in modern publications.

DR. SAMUEL M. BLUMENFIELD

*The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York*, by Hyman B. Grinstein. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia. 645 pp. \$3.00.

A Talmudic saying, "sadno d'Arho chad hu," the ways of the world are alike, applies to mores, to human relations, to various ages in Jewish historical development. This becomes apparent upon reading this very significant historical work.

Covering 200 years of American-Jewish history—and it is safe to say that while Mr. Grinstein deals with New York his work actually reflects Jewish life in the entire country during the period of 1654-1860 covered by his book—we learn that ambitions, jealousies, and controversies leading to competitive efforts among the various American Jewish organizations have not changed in our modern era.

When the story told by Mr. Grinstein begins, there are 23 Jews in New York. When it ends, 206 years later, there are 40,000. Today, with nearly 2,500,000 Jews

in New York, we find as little unity as there was at that time. And there are other similarities. For instance, it is doubtful whether the comparatively small number of Jews mastering Hebrew at that time has increased proportionately in our day. Just as synagogues and organizations split into fragments then, we still suffer from a split Jewish personality. But as in our own time, there was always a remnant, a group of courageous and valiant men and women who were ready to advance Jewish ideals, to organize movements for the advance of Hebrew and Jewish culture.

Even on the question of Palestine, we find counterparts in the decades gone by. There were strong pro-Palestine elements in New York more than 100 years ago. The "shekel" was introduced as the medium of taxation 110 years ago. Jews were inclined to leave legacies to Palestine and many American Jews made pilgrimages to Eretz Israel.

If we complain of over-organization today, we should study the history of early New York. Organizations were formed on the slightest pretext, and in one instance a congregation was formed to facilitate a wedding—and its life-length was exactly the one wedding ceremony.

A most interesting section in the book reviews the history of Jewish periodicals. The first Jewish periodical in America, *The Jew*, was published from 1823 to 1825 by New York's first Jewish printer, Solomon H. Jackson. Others followed, and except for a brief period of prosperity of *The Occident* most of them had hard sledding. The story of charges made for the insertion of birth notices in *The Messenger*, to place the burden of insertion upon those paying for them and to eliminate charges of prejudicial selection of those favored with announcements, make interesting reading.

Educators will find the chapters in education and culture of high value as indicators of the tough struggle traditionally experienced by our people in assuring a wholesome Jewish education for our children.

One activity which has now become obsolete but which had been a major responsibility of American Jewry in the years covered in Mr. Grinstein's book was Americanization. The end of the immigration flow has eliminated the need for

Americanization. Readers of Mr. Grinstein's book will, however, find his story of American Jewry's Americanization program of great interest and importance.

"The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York" is so fascinating a study of the development of the largest Jewish community in the world that this volume ought to serve as a textbook in our schools. As comparative history, for those who would know the background of present Jewish life in America, it is superb. This reviewer recommends this work very highly. His one wish is that Mr. Grinstein will follow it with another work, presenting the history of New York Jewry since 1860.

PHILIP SLOMOVITZ

*One Destiny*, by Sholem Asch. Putnam's, New York. 88 pp. \$1.50.

Sholem Asch has subtitled *One Destiny* with the words "An Epistle to the Christians." How does it happen then that Jews are interested in this work and that Jewish periodicals wish to review it?

Asch is one of the greatest living Jewish writers and anything which comes from his pen is interesting to Jews. This book, moreover, is of particular interest in that it climaxes in a non-fictional, quasi-theological form his recent provocative works *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle*. It is to this book that we turn then, seeking to find an answer to the controversies that have filled the Jewish press since Asch's glorification of Jesus and Paul. Is Asch almost a convert to Christianity *a la* Werfel, or does his recent work have a different motivation?

The basic ideas of the book concern the God of the Jews and the Christ of the Christians. It is the glory of the Jewish people that it conceived of a single God, a God of all the world and its inhabitants, a God who insisted on moral behavior. Israel developed this idea into a fruitful faith, but a faith for its people alone. To Jesus of Nazareth belongs the merit of living this idea. He made the thought so simple in outline, so universal in application, *through himself*, that the Jewish idea of God became the faith of the world.

It is this complementing of Judaism by Christianity which brings the author to his faith and purpose in this work. Juda-

ism and Christianity are interdependent. Each would fail without the other. "... no salvation can come until the two halves are joined together and become one part of God."

But anti-Semitism keeps Jews and Christians apart. The chief cause of this hatred is the Jew's religion, which is deemed different. If only Christians would realize that Judaism, instead of being different, is very much like Christianity, the hatred would cease and the way be open for a "*rapprochement*" between the two. It is with a fierce and driving style that the author accuses Christianity of the sins which are history and the transgressions which make today's tears. From the days of the prescriptions of the early church to the passivity in our own time toward Hitler's calculated violence against the Jew, the roll of shame is read.

Israel lives on by God's command, for it has a mission to humanity. Israel serves as a guardian of the Christ, for the Anti-Christ must destroy it, before it can reach its very foe. Christianity, then, should fight anti-Semitism in every way, for in so doing it fights the forces which seek to destroy it.

If this is done, the future holds great hope for the two. Since messianism is to Asch the great inspiration in Judaism, the two religions have in common the motivation of their faith by the anticipation of the advent of the Messiah. Whether it be the advent or the return makes little difference to Asch. Through their common messianism and ethic, Judaism and Christianity can band together to work for the good. Now that the barbarians have been defeated the chance to build a new and good world is before us. In this hour of decision we should take advantage of the mutual understanding brought about by the war and by uniting our efforts strike evil the final blow. This is the destiny of the Judeo-Christian idea. America is the arena in which the struggle is shaping itself.

It is not difficult to see why Asch wrote "the two works which are one." *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle* are his way of demonstrating to a Christian world how much it owes to Judaism. It is not so much Jesus or Paul who are the heroes of the work, but the Judaism from which

they sprang. We can even understand why Asch accepted the New Testament accounts of these figures uncritically. His mission to the gentiles was too important to be jeopardized by arguments best left to scholars.

Above all, in reading these books, the three of them, it is necessary to remember that they are written for the gentile world, that Asch feels he is doing his service to his people by presenting the evidence for the Jewish share in Christianity and hence our civilization.

Yet, is Asch doing us a service? Insofar as he wishes to demonstrate the debt of Christianity and civilization to Judaism, we must express our gratitude. However, if it is his attempt to have the two religions become one, then he is doing us a disservice.

It is true that Christianity and Judaism fructify each other. For instance, in our own day much of the advance in Jewish thought has come as the result of questions originally posed by Christian scholars. It is only recently that Judaism has found itself out of the ghetto long enough to discover its own peculiar problems. Christianity's debt to Judaism, starting with Jesus, is still growing. But the basis of fertilization is the mixture of things which are unlike. The two religions will continue to stimulate each other only as long as they remain distinct. Unity of purpose and a common foundation can serve us as the basis for living together peacefully. Diversity within such peace can produce only good.

There is more difference between modern Judaism and Christianity than Asch sees. In the Judaism that is coming to be, messianism is not a passive waiting for the divine act. It is instead the working and striving on the part of man for those social ideals whose achievement will bring the Kingdom of God. This is a positive religion. It is a religion which has faith in man's capacity to create the good—even in the face of the holocaust we have just undergone. It is this aspect of our religion which is emerging so clearly in America. It is this which will give us the strength to plan and build in the face of the destruction of our own people; yea, even in the face of the threatened destruction of the world. Modern Judaism is not messianic in the old

Christian sense, but has an optimism which is its antithesis.

Perhaps Asch does not wish a complete synthesis of the two faiths. Perhaps he would rather see us work side by side in harmony for the many things which we and our Christian brothers desire in common. If it is so, then his thoughts will prove more acceptable to us. Let us hope this is what was meant by the phrase, "... no salvation can come until the two halves are joined together and become one part of God."

It may be significant that Sholem Asch's epistle to the Christians was titled *One Destiny* rather than *One Faith*.

EUGENE BOROWITZ

*A Nation of Nations*, by Louis Adamic. Harper & Bros., New York. 399 pp. \$3.50.

There is a tremendous American immigrant literature—novels, plays, poems, reminiscences, human interest stories, philosophical works, sociological studies, and much besides. It ranges in quality from the superb to a low order of screeching sentimentalism. We are all familiar with the immigrant's success story. It is to most Americans a too many times told tale of which we have grown weary long ago. If we are to read again anything of that genre, it must have qualities that transcend the commonplace. It must be essentially original, or must tell old truths in a strikingly new form.

Louis Adamic has been writing of his fellow immigrants for more than fifteen years. He has published book after book, article after article, story after story, most of them dealing with the newer immigrant groups, particularly the South Slavs. He plans to publish other such books, articles, stories in the years to come. But the spirit of his writing is as fresh and fertile today as it was when H. L. Mencken and Haldeman-Julius first "discovered" him. I venture to say that there will be the same zestful quality in what he will write in the years to come.

This is a remarkable fact and calls for explanation. One senses the reasons for Adamic's staying powers in reading this latest book of his, called, in Whitman's fine phrase, *A Nation of Nations*. Adamic is a young and venturesome philosopher. He sees the American immigrant as more than an individual. He sees him as part

of a process—a principle and a portent. In this book, he gathers men and women from the corners of the earth, places them on our continent, observes what happens to them and to America, and learns that the action and reaction of the one upon the other produce results that mean a new promise, and ultimately a new fulfillment.

Jews are very much a part of the Adamic scheme of things. He sees us not as Jews but as Russians, Poles, Germans, and other national strains, and finally as Americans. He does not try particularly to find in us peculiar racial or national traits; nor does he dissociate our destiny from that of other national groups. To him we are not an oppressed minority, such as the American Negro. We are blended into the pattern of the whole.

The average reader may find the long chapter on the Negro one of the best in the book. It sums up the history, attainments, difficulties, hopes, fears, frustrations of the black man; but it is not a basic contribution of the scope of *An American Dilemma* or *Black Metropolis*.

There are other chapters which are far more striking, if only because this reader was unfamiliar with the subject matter. The chapter on the Irish, for example, tells of the little known conspiracy of Anglophiles to belittle the contributions of the Irish. The many Revolutionary and pre-Revolutionary leaders of that gifted and militant race are falsely described by some alleged historians as Scotch-Irish, or it is hinted, without evidence, that they came from Britain and not the Emerald Isle.

Adamic does not feel himself compelled to praise all the peoples of whom he writes. He varies sharply the usual immigrants' formula. His is the critical approach of the honest man. He does not hesitate to attack the anti-Semitism and isolationism of large elements of the Irish population. He takes the dominant leadership of the Poles to task for its reactionary tendencies. He seeks out individuals and groups who are in tune with the benevolent Zeitgeist.

Adamic himself has capacity for growth. Some day he will complete his task of interpreting the immigrants to America. He will then give us other books on other phases of life, written with the clarity,

the simplicity, the shrewdness, and the fervor that we have grown to expect of him. His immigrants' books, including this one, will remain as a memorial to his fine spirit and the varied millions of human beings who have built our country.

ELMER GERTZ

*The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible*, edited by George Ernest Wright and Floyd Vivian Filson. Philadelphia. The Westminster Press. 114 pp., 33 maps. Ill. \$3.50.

*The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, by John D. Davis. Revised and rewritten by Henry Snyder Gehman. Philadelphia. The Westminster Press. 658 pp. Ill. 16 maps. \$3.50.

The Biblical scholar, the philologist, the historian, the archaeologist, all down through the ages have gathered a vast store of knowledge and material about the early history and civilization of Palestine. With the rise of Biblical archaeology, however, a new chapter in the search for a better understanding of the Biblical world was begun. American, British, and continental scholars dug up with painstaking care and infinite patience this ruined town and that, seeking for every vestige of the life of ancient Israel. Gradually these scholars began to bring together their discoveries and conclusions. Books on the archaeology of the Bible appeared. Maps and atlases were made.

Our knowledge of Biblical lands has been greatly improved by extensive exploration in recent decades. The last generation has seen an epoch-making advance in the methods and achievements of archaeological work. A new degree of mastery of the languages of the Near East, a hitherto unattained correlation of the discoveries in the Mediterranean and Near East, and the development of adequate methods of excavation have all combined to make this advance possible.

Numerous books and journals recorded the discoveries of the scholars. Older works were revised in an effort to keep up with the fresh discoveries. Revisions of older works, however, could never present the new knowledge. For "there are few fields where the progress of discovery makes constant revision of handbooks and other aids to study more necessary than in



Biblical research . . . Since it is only in our generation that the progress of research has made real synthesis possible, all standard books appearing earlier are in imperative need of revision, often of complete rewriting." Thus Professor Albright, the acknowledged authority in this field, describes the situation in an introductory article to the *Atlas* discussing the methods that have been employed in the rediscovery of the Biblical world.

It was therefore an excellent idea of the Westminster Press to plan a series of books which would present to the Bible reader and student the results of this modern scholarly research in an authentic and interesting manner. The above two volumes are the first in a series known as the *Westminster Aids to the Study of the Scriptures*.

The *Atlas* is primarily concerned with the historical geography of the Biblical lands. A careful study of this field is imperative for various reasons. These regions have exercised an immense influence upon our Western World. He who would understand the major factors which have shaped our faith, thought, and life cannot neglect the historical geography of Biblical lands. Moreover, the study of geography is necessary for understanding the Bible. The Bible is not a treatise on philosophy or theology, nor does it present a manual of abstract ethics. "It is primarily a historical literature, which tells how God confronted men at particular times and places. Geography, history, and religion are so inextricably bound together in it that the religious message in it cannot be truly understood without attention to the setting and conditions of the revelation." In this respect the Bible is unique among the world's scriptures; it is the only one for whose comprehension the study of historical geography is basic.

The *Atlas* presents a series of maps which set forth clearly and vividly the geographical setting of the Biblical story, beginning with the world of the Patriarchs and ending with the rise of Christianity. Each map plate is accompanied by an explanatory chapter which attempts to provide the essential facts needed to comprehend the historical and geographical framework of Scripture. Carefully selected photographs supplement the

maps and text. Special chapters are devoted to the history of Jerusalem and to a survey of the archaeological excavations in Palestine during the last century. There is also a complete list of Biblical towns, cities, rivers, and other geographical points, indexed for quick location on the maps.

In the printing of the maps the latest methods of map reproduction were used, involving hand-drawn maps photographically reproduced by half-tone engraving. As a result, these relief maps are beautiful to look at and easy to follow. The maps and their explanatory material are the result of painstaking research and study. The whole work is admirable and there is nothing in English to equal it.

The *Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* is a completely revised edition of Davis' *Bible Dictionary*. All entries have been checked, revised, or rewritten in the light of recent advances made in philology, geography, history of the ancient Near East, and Bible criticism. The *Dictionary* is thorough and reliable. Regrettably, this principle of sound scholarship has not been observed in all articles concerning things Jewish. Take for instance the article on Pharisaism. An evaluation of Pharisaism cannot be based, as is done by the author, on New Testament sources, which are hostile to the Pharisees. The Pharisees have a right to be judged on the basis of their own utterances and records, namely the Rabbinical literature. To state that in Pharisaism "religion becomes external" and that "the disposition of the heart is less vital than the outward act" is unforgivable, if the works of Jewish and Christian authorities on Pharisaism such as Lauterbach, Baeck, Moore, Herford, can be easily consulted. One is thinking of Travers Herford, the Christian scholar, who has devoted a lifetime to a study of Pharisaism after he had become thoroughly familiar with Talmudical literature. Herford has been pointing out again and again the gross misunderstanding of Pharisaism by Christian scholars due to their lack of familiarity with the Rabbinical sources or their unwillingness to take due cognizance of these records. Has all the toil of Herford, venerable scholar and champion of truth, been of no avail?

E. L. EHLMANN

*This Is Judaism*, by Ferdinand Isserman. Willett, Clark & Co., Chicago. \$2.50.

The Chairman of the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Central Conference of Rabbis, has written an interpretation of Reform Judaism, particularly for non-Jews, and has done a good piece of work.

The book is divided into three sections. The first traces the development of Judaism from "Primitive Semitism to Prophetic Judaism." He deals with the crude beliefs of our early nomadic progenitors, traces their development thru the ages of the earliest writers, and continues thru the time of the prophets. He sums up the conclusions about this whole period, which he says are agreed upon by "all who have studied the Bible from the angle first suggested by Ibn Ezra and later developed by Spinoza." These are as follows:

1. "The Torah is the work of many men over many centuries.
2. "Many of its stories are not historical, but were invented or adapted by religious men to teach their beliefs about God and man.
3. "The writing and editing of the Torah took place over a period of from five hundred to a thousand years. The youngest parts of the Torah date perhaps from the year 300 B.C.E.
4. "The place of a narrative in the Torah is no index of its age. The youngest story may appear first and the oldest, last.
5. "The Torah reveals the growth of ethics and religion among the ancient Hebrews.
6. "Its greatness lies in the fact that through it the wisest religious teachers expressed the noblest ideas about God and man, ideas which form the foundation of three great modern religions, Mohammedanism, Christianity, and Judaism.
7. "The Torah is not the literal word of God, but does set forth God's will as understood by deeply religious men."

Various subjects are treated in detail in this part: The two Creation accounts; scientific approaches to the various legends; the non-literary and literary prophets. Copious quotations to bear out the teachings of the prophets are cited; they are well-selected and instructive. The section ends with a historical sketch of

"The Codes of the Bible," based on modern biblical criticism.

The second part of the work deals with "The Fundamentals of Judaism—Its Theology." Here are discussions on the "Universality of Religion," "The Belief in the God of Prophetic Religion," "Man In Prophetic Religion," "The Bible—The Sacred Literature of Prophetic Judaism," "The Miracles of the Bible," "Prayer," "Immortality," "The Kaddish," "The Messiah Idea," and "Jesus, A Son of the Synagog."

Isserman in this section develops the importance of the concept we call "Ethical Monotheism," and states why the "Shema,"—the "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One,"—has become the supreme credal expression in Judaism. He tells us that Judaism and Christianity part company because the latter does not accept Judaism's "rigid, uncompromising monotheism, but modified it when it said that Jesus was a representation of God on earth, in a sense in which no other human being was a representation of God. It spoke of the divinity of Jesus. Judaism could have accepted the humanity of Jesus, but to worship Jesus as one worships God, was in direct contradiction with the prophetic religion."

The section on "Miracles of the Bible" states that in the history of Jewish thought four attitudes toward Bible miracles were developed, namely: 1. The "belief that God is so powerful that he can do anything that he wants to do, at any time he pleases." 2. When "God created the universe, he laid down the unchangeable laws by which nature works, and provided for a number of exceptions, these exceptions being the miracles of the Bible." 3. "While Biblical miracles happened as described, a fuller understanding of them would show that they did not involve a suspension of the laws of nature." 4. "The most modern group of Jewish thinkers recognizes that the miracles of the Bible have no historical basis. They simply did not occur." This group must of course refer to Reform Jewish scholars. It can hardly be imagined that scholars like L. Ginsberg, Chaim Chernowitz, Rabbi Herzog, and even Louis Finkelstein will deny the occurrence of miracles in the Old Testament.

Space prevents a detailed review of this volume. It is essentially a worthwhile work for the purpose intended. In many

places its author has, however, included sermon material and popular concepts which go well in the pulpit but would hardly pass scholarly and scientific scrutiny. The statement, for instance, that "the teachers of the synagogue decreed that no Jewish house of worship may have any artistic representation of a human or animal form or of any other material thing," in order to strengthen the meaning of the Second Commandment, is to an extent correct. But the custom was not universal. A goodly number of ancient synagogues has been excavated within the last forty years, and on the walls of a number, representations of not only material and animal forms have been found, but of human forms. It is no longer accepted as true in the study of ancient synagogue architecture, that synagogues avoided artistic representations as decorations on their walls and floors.

A passage that would be challenged by modern psychologists reads like this: "A believer in God believes not because he must; not because some tyrant compels him . . . but because unless he does so, life would have little meaning for him." The late Prof. James's *Will to Believe* has made the first part of the quotation obsolete, while anyone can attest to the fact there are innumerable "atheists" who would testify against the truth of the second part. Moreover, something might be said about just what is meant by "belief in God."

The statement that the Bible is the "work of men who conceived it as a missionary library to be used in winning all mankind over from paganism to Judaism, from crude polytheism to ethical monotheism," is pretty difficult to accept historically. Christianity was definitely a missionary religion. It is true that there are some books in the Bible that can be interpreted as missionary treatises. But as for the Old Testament as a whole having been written "as a missionary library," we are afraid that that thesis remains in the category of the unproved.

While there are a number of statements that can be objected to, there are many that are very good. We note, for instance: "Because Judaism believes in the decency, the goodness, the justice of man, it believes in humanity. It believes that an ordered world is possible. It believes that poverty can be abolished, that war can be made to disappear, that vio-

lence and hatred can be eliminated. It believes that the noblest dreams which the noblest men have for all human beings can and will some day be realized." There are a number of passages equally effective. The section on "The Application of Judaism to Life," is very good. The subjects of persecution, modern anti-Semitism, Zionism, Democracy, and Race Relations, are well treated. We must remember that this book was written for those who are not familiar with the ideas, ideals, and beliefs of Reform Judaism, and therefore such discussions cannot be either complete or thorough. They must be popular and understandable. Isserman has done a good job which should satisfy both the goyish Goyim who have many misconceptions about Judaism, and the Jewish Goyim who know so little about it, but who think that because they are born of Jewish parents, that little, often wrong, suffices. The book fills a need. It is nicely got up and makes a valuable addition to any library of general culture.

G. GEORGE FOX

*The Best Is Yet . . .*, by Morris L. Ernst. Harper and Brothers. 291 pp. \$3.00.

Science has devised a mechanism through which we can observe the workings of the inner organs of men and animals. Thus by looking through this fluoroscopic device we can observe the digestive organs engaged in their daily functions. This book is the window through which we observe the thought processes of the author.

In a fast, readable, and conversational, rather than literary, style, the prominent New York lawyer who hobnobs with "radicals" and with bankers writes about anything and everything encompassed in a lifetime—everything from civil liberties to garbage collection in New York, from Zionism to sex. Like the bubbling of a contented brook, the thought processes flow on and on revealing in a smooth but variegated rhythm the author's views, his aims, his aspirations, hopes, prejudices, hobbies, likes and dislikes—everything. To be sure the thoughts we witness through this window are not always correlated as Ernst flits from Varga girls to the high cost of life insurance or from sailing at Nantucket to the dictatorship of Mayor La Guardia. Nor is the exposition complete. But that is the way the human

mind works, as thoughts flow in and out, changing rapidly from the war to tonight's dinner to the aesthetic qualities of a shapely limb—and back to the war again.

Urban to the extreme, Ernst is in love with life and the excitement of the big city in which he lives. And the myriad battles for human liberty, for better government, for enlightenment, to be fought—and won—are what make it worth living. Ernst knows everybody and talks to everybody. The book abounds in profiles, sketchy like everything else between its covers, of such famous personalities as Justice Brandeis—whom Ernst reveres above all others, Heywood Broun, the Roosevelts, J. Edgar Hoover, and Edna Ferber, to mention a few.

*The Best Is Yet* approaches the exciting in its narrative of the labors of the Ernst family to overcome daughter Joan's congenital deafness, and the bitter in its condemnation of the doctors who offered only pessimism instead of hope. And the provocative is not lacking. Ernst, one of the founders of the National Lawyers Guild, withdrew from its ranks when it became "Communist dominated." Ernst belongs to the one per cent or less of Jews who are anti-Zionist. There are many who will challenge his superficial one-page summation of the "evils" of Zionism, as there are those who will scoff at his despair of the Guild.

Interesting in the present day when local stalwarts of civil liberties are urging some restrictions on freedom of speech to curb the "hate" literature seeking to foment racial and religious discord, are the author's views on the subject. Describing his appearance on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union before the Post Office Committee of the House of Representatives in opposition to a bill denying mailing privileges to any "defamatory and false statements which tend to expose persons characterized by race and religion to hatred, contempt, or ridicule," he says:

To ban all material capable of creating ridicule or contempt or hatred of a religious or racial group is absurd. I explained at the hearing that I wanted for myself the right to hold up to contempt the Baptists when they outlaw teaching of evolution, the Catholics of Boston when they fight freedom for birth control, the Jehovah's Witnesses group, in their un-American attacks on Catholicism, or the Zionists when they urge a Political Jewish state.

Ernst favors legislation which would require disclosure as to source of all printed material entering the mails and thus remove the cloak of anonymity from peddlers of hate who operate largely through secrecy and stealth.

Morris L. Ernst has lived an active and useful life. He has been in the front ranks of the fighters against literary censorship. His is one of the strong arms of the American Civil Liberties Union in its fight for freedom of expression. His defense against the charge of obscenity of such works as *Ulysses*, *The Well of Loneliness*, *The Sex Side of Life*, and more recently, *Life Magazine's The Birth of a Baby* and *Esquire's Varga Girl*, are monumental advances in the fight against Comstockery. American motherhood owes something to his legal championing of the birth control activities of Margaret Sanger. And yet these solid achievements are not aptly portrayed in this book. In the current that sweeps by, these most important phases of his life are snatched up like logs in a rushing stream and dropped just as suddenly for lighter timber, such as his hobbies of sailing and carpentering. This book is not a profound presentation of the author's work, but rather a running commentary on people, things, and events.

The optimism which irradiates Ernst's philosophy of life is mirrored in the title of the book taken from Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*:

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life, for which the first was made—

Ernst's career merits a better, a fuller, a more profound story of the fight for civil liberties. As to that, the best is yet to be.

DAVID F. SILVERZWEIG

*One Nation*, by Wallace Stegner and the Editors of *Look*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945. 340 pp. \$3.75.

Over a year ago the editors of *Look* secured the services of Wallace Stegner and a crew of *Look* photographers for the purpose of surveying racial and religious tensions in wartime America. The result of their efforts is *One Nation*. Taking its title from the salute to the flag, "One nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," the book has done an



admirable job of fulfilling the hopes of the *Look* editors.

There are many books in the same field which cover the subject more fully with excellent charts and figures. However, for a long time there has been a need for a book on minority groups written not for the academicians, but for the mass of men and women who—if they do sometimes read—do not care for “dry” reading, but want their facts in more attractive form.

For such people *One Nation* is just the right book. In the main it is composed of excellent photography with brief but effective commentary, giving adequate information on the problems of each culture group it presents. But even if the text is not read (although the illustrations will induce the observer to refer to the text), the pictures tell the ugly story of ignorance, intolerance, and persecution, as well as the gains in understanding and good neighborliness.

Stegner doesn't attempt to cover all the minority groups. He limits himself to the Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Mexican, Hispano, Indian, Negro, Catholic, Jew. The method of presentation for each group follows the same pattern: introduction to the subject; statement of issues and problems; photographs with commentary to show living conditions, employment, persecution; progress made during the war.

Stegner points out that with the exception of the Japanese, each of the minorities has gained during the war. They have been allowed into positions previously inaccessible to them. With increased pay, their living conditions and apparel have also improved. Their personal dignity has risen and their neighbors have accepted them more actively than ever before. Stegner makes it clear that if these gains are to be held, the FEPC must receive the official nod from Congress, despite the ranting of the Rankins and the biliousness of the Bilbos.

Gains have been made in race relations. The government in 1924 gave the American Indians citizenship status and in 1934, with the Indian Reorganization Act, presented them with the means of achieving a more abundant and happy life. The Springfield Plan and the “Panels of Americans” are attempting to educate and influence Americans to understand

their neighbors. In Parkway Gardens, New York, an experiment in mixed neighborhoods has been working, the Negroes and whites having found a working basis of living together; and there are other examples during the war where minorities have made headway in neighborhoods and organizations that formerly excluded them.

Communities are becoming race-problem-conscious in a constructive sense. Most large cities and many states now have a committee or commission on interracial problems. At the end of the book, Stegner rightly points out that the task of making democracy live “is not a job for Congress or the President or the Supreme Court. It is a job for the average American in every community, the Smiths and Johnsons and Browns in whose image democracy was created.”

As one sees more copies of *Look Magazine* in the average home than, let us say, the *Yale Review*, it is to be hoped that this picture study on intergroup relations will be more generally popular than other more factual and academic studies on the question.

ISAAC B. SHAPIRO

*Stories from Near and Far*, by Lion Feuchtwanger. The Viking Press: New York, 177 pp. 1945. \$2.50.

These short stories or sketches are such as artists make of scenes and persons that catch the eye. For the most part they are undramatic and action is of less significance than character. Some are seemingly drawn from the writer's personal experience, episodes and incidents from actual life. Two or three, such as “The Death of Nero” and “Marianne in India,” are historical sketches with sufficient invented action to display the chief characters as living human beings. These are the most vivid and memorable, for into them has been put more imagination and craftsmanship than in the others, which though done simply and naturally seem but casual jottings of an observant spectator of life, to be worked up later, perhaps into something significant. The significance of a few, indeed, is not apparent. Just what it was that arrested the writer's attention sufficiently to justify the sketch does not appear. One story of early Hitlerite Germany, “The House in the Shady Lane,” may, perhaps, be sym-

bolical. It is the story of a scholar who has acquired a unique manuscript "which contained an unequivocal reference to the existence of a man whose characteristics were more like those of Jesus of the Gospel than those of any other historically attested figure of that time." The manuscript is coveted by the rascally young disciple of the Professor. The disciple turns Nazi and after the Professor's death vainly seeks the manuscript. Later the daughter tells the narrator that the manuscript is well hidden in a wheat field. Sometime it will be unearthed again. This and one or two other sketches with contemporary implications, together with the stories which portray Nero and Warren Hastings are, in the reviewer's opinion, the best in a volume which lacks the distinction one expects in the work of an author so distinguished as Feuchtwanger.

C. G.

*Focus*, by Arthur Miller. Reynal & Hitchcock. 215 pp. \$2.50.

Lawrence Newman, three generations American, an Episcopalian, a white collar wage earner, makes a startling discovery that, spectacles on his nose, he is the very image of a so-called typical Jew. A like reaction is shared by others. Sharing it, their behavior toward him is radically changed and Newman is made to feel the opprobrium of being thought a Jew in a world poisoned by anti-Semitism.

Until his failing eye-sight compelled recourse to eye-glasses, Newman was only mildly and non-professionally anti-Semitic. He shared the common prejudices of his suburban neighbors; never violent, he accepted their opinion that the invasion of Jews vitiated property values. He followed rigorously the dictum of his employers that as office manager he was never to hire a Jew or a Jewess.

But spectacles astride his nose, he was "offensively" and ineluctably a Jew. His looks and appearance disturbed a strictly Gentile atmosphere he himself had helped to create; a Jewish physiognomy was not to be tolerated. Newman resigns when asked to hide his features and person in less prominent quarters of an office which, until then, he ruled for fifteen years.

Job hunting, he met hostility; he could

not lose his new identity for, without his glasses he was helpless; wearing them, he carried the crown of thorns which is the fate of many Jews who seek a place in the Christian sun. Under the circumstances, when applying for a job—prior experience, aptitude for a peculiar type of employment, his assertions even that he was Gentile, counted for nothing. The fact that he looked like a Jew damned him in advance. He obtained, finally, a position with a Jewish owned firm which practiced equality of opportunity to an extent that a "nigger even is a bookkeeper."

Kindred prejudices prevailed in his residential suburb; there, some of his neighbors, Christian Front members, were plotting to purge the community of the "Hebes." The immediate object of their hunt was one Finkelstein, a newspaper vendor and storekeeper, a law abiding citizen whose presence in a predominantly "Christian" community was resented by the Christian Front. Newman, appalled at the prospect of finding himself irrevocably identified as a Jew, asserted his solidarity with the rabble and, to curry favor with the Jew baiters, attended a Christian Front rally. He was forcibly ejected and beaten, because he was taken for a Jew.

In this environment and predicament Newman discovered but one rational fellow-American — the Jew Finkelstein. Through him he came to closer grips with the incongruities and the cruelty of blind prejudice and of the calculated malice of those who would use the Jew as a scapegoat to further their own nefarious ends. In an exciting finish when the Christian Front bandits attack him on the street, he conquered a streak of pussillanimity which made him, at first, direct his assailants toward Finkelstein, joined forces with the Jew and, though badly mauled in the fracas, beat off the attackers.

The book, of course, is a bitter satire on Jew haters and Jew persecution. Yet, unique and sharp as is the author's glimpse into the depths of blind, unreasoning prejudice, exciting and interesting as the various incidents are in *Focus*, the book has but casual value in exposing the curse of anti-Semitism. It is a useful volume in that it points to a growing tumor in the organism of an otherwise healthy America.

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